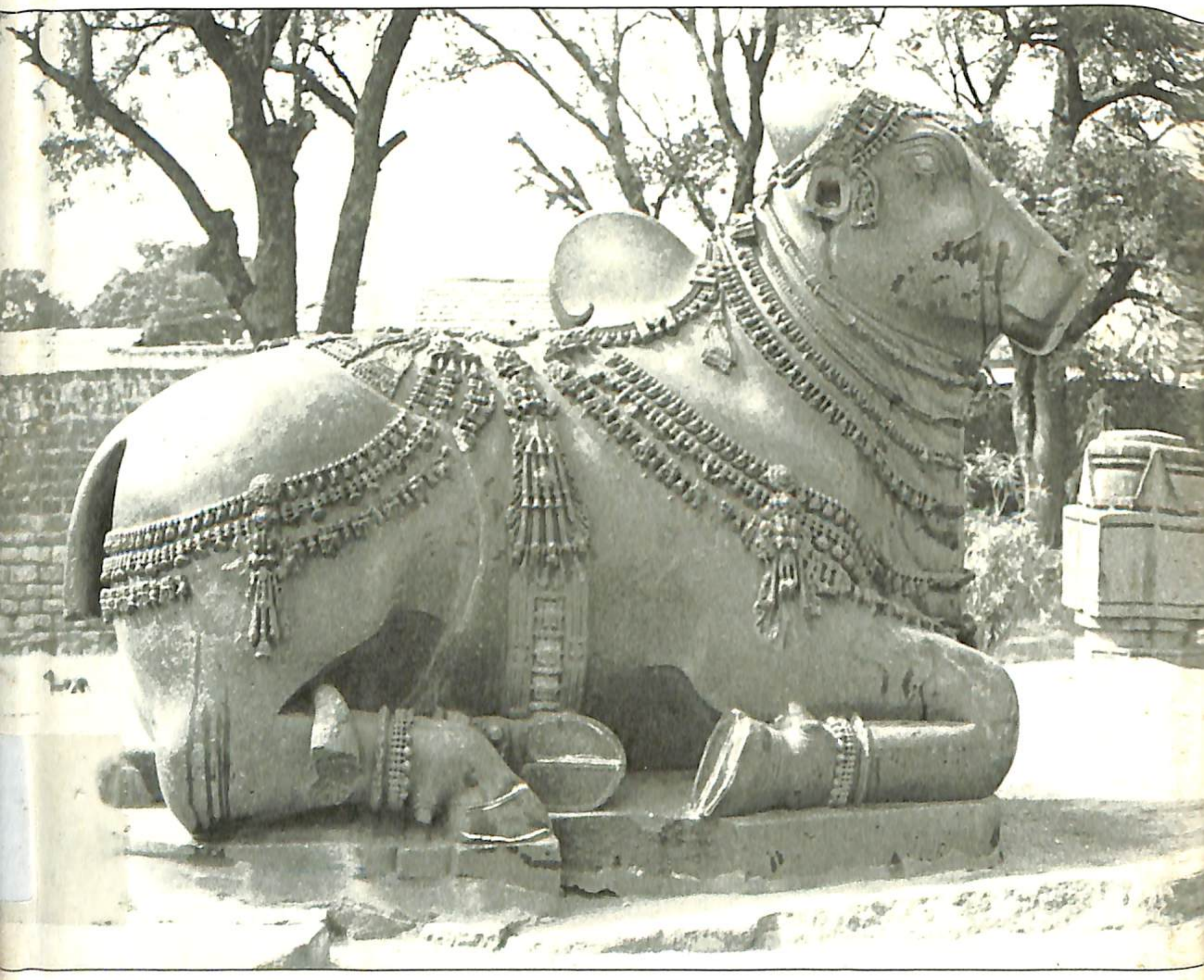
ŚIVA'S WARRIORS

The *Basava Purāṇa* of Pālkuriki Somanātha

Translated by
Velcheru Narayana Rao



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The *Basava Purāṇa* of Pālkuriki Somanātha

Translated from the Telugu by
Velcheru Narayana Rao
Assisted by Gene H. Roghair

"This is a translation of a long, important, fascinating, and little-known Telugu poem about the saints of the medieval Vīraśaiva tradition of South India. It presents an entire body of new data that challenges many of our present understandings of Indian religion in general and of South Indian religion in particular. The scholarship is superb, careful, and full, and the translation has kept a perfect balance between a smooth reading in English and the quirkiness of the Telugu way of saying things."—*Wendy Doniger, Divinity School, University of Chicago*

Here is the first translation into English of the *Basava Purāṇa*, a fascinating collection of tales that sums up and characterizes one of the most important and most radical religious groups of South India. The ideas of the Vīraśaivas, or militant Śaivas, are represented in those tales by an intriguing mix of outrageous excess and traditional conservatism. Written in Telugu in the thirteenth century, the *Basava Purāṇa* is an anthology of legends of Vīraśaiva saints and a hagiography of Basaveśvara, the twelfth-century Vīraśaiva leader. Although Telugu is one of the major cultural traditions of India, with a classical literature reaching back to the eleventh century, until now there has been no translation or exposition of any of the Telugu Viraśaiva works in English. The introduction orients the reader to the text and helps in an understanding of the poet's point of view.

The author of the *Basava Purāṇa*, Pālkuriki Somanātha, is revered as a saint by Vīraśaivas in Andhra and Karnataka. His books are regarded as sacred texts, and he is also considered to be a major poet in Telugu and Kannada.

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FOR DAVID SHULMAN

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This translation has taken a long time to complete. When I did the first draft with the assistance of Gene Roghair, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1979, I knew it was not nearly ready for publication. There were far too many unclear passages and unknown words and references.

Somanātha was not easy to understand. We benefited immensely from the pioneering research in Śaiva works by Veturi Prabhakara Sastri and Cilukuri Narayana Rao, and especially from the prefaces written by Prabhakara Sastri to his edition of the *Basava Purāṇa* and by Narayana Rao to his edition of the *Paṇḍitārādhya Caritra*. But the text of the *Basava Purāṇa* itself had no commentary and there was little help available for the many words and references not listed in dictionaries and glossaries.

In Hyderabad I read three chapters of the book with Nidadavolu Venkata Rao, a renowned scholar of Śaivite literature. Although he was ailing at that time, he kindly read the text with me. He was very helpful, but still questions persisted.

I visited India on other trips, consulted scholars, read Śaivite works not available in the United States, and tried to make sense of difficult passages. Years went by and progress was slow.

Then Cekuri Ramarao gave me a rare copy of the *Padya Basava Purāṇamu* of Piḍuparti Somanātha. This was a verse retelling of Pālkuriki Somanātha's *Basava Purāṇa*, for which I had been looking for years. This book helped me immensely in understanding many unclear passages in the *Basava Purāṇa*.

Soon after that I met with Mallampalli Sarabhesvara Sarma, a practicing Śaivite and probably the best-informed scholar of Śaiva texts in Andhra today. I read with him all seven chapters of the *Basava Purāṇa* during two of my visits to India, in 1986 and 1987. At that point I was reasonably comfortable with my understanding of the text and made my last revision of the translation.

I acknowledge the help I received from both Nidadavolu Venkata Rao and Mallampalli Sarabhesvara Sarma with gratitude. Responsibility for the translation, however, is entirely mine.

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The translation would not have been completed without the support, encouragement, and expertise of David Shulman, who has stood by me and helped me finish it. He has been my guide and friend. To him I dedicate this book.

ABBREVIATIONS

AITM	J. L. Sastri, ed., *Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology*. 6 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970
BP	Pālkuriki Somanātha, *Basava Purāṇa*
LP	*Liṅga Purāṇa*
PBP	Piḍuparti Somanātha, *Basava Purānamu: Padyakāvyamu*, popularly known as *Padya Basava Purāṇamu*
PC	Pālkuriki Somanātha, *Paṇḍitārādhya Caritra*
PP	*Pěriya Purāṇam*
SP	*Śiva Purāṇa*

GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION

Telugu is a South Indian Dravidian language very different in phonetic structure and vocabulary from Sanskrit, an Indo-European language. But literary Telugu has assimilated a vast number of words from Sanskrit. We have used standard, modern transliteration for Indian languages. All Sanskrit words and names are spelled as they are in Telugu. (Feminine nouns and names ending in long *ī* or long *ā* are given with their Telugu short endings.) The following guide is meant to provide approximate sound values for those unfamiliar with Telugu.

Vowels

a like the *u* in but
ā like the *a* in father
i like the *i* in pill
ī like the *i* in machine
u like the *u* in put
ū like the *u* in rule
ṛ is a short vocalic *r* pronounced like the *ri* in rig.
ĕ like the *e* in bet
e like the *a* in gate
ai like the *ai* in aisle
ŏ like the *o* in no
o like the *o* in rote
au like the *ow* in now

Consonants

Consonants may be pronounced like their English equivalents, with the following exceptions.

Aspriated consonants (*kh, gh, ch, jh, th, dh, ph, bh*) should be pronounced with a strong explosion of breath after the initial consonant. For instance, *ph* is to be pronounced like the *ph* in uphill (though as a single sound), and, similarly, *th* should be pronounced like the *th* in anthill.

C is like the *ch* in child. In words of Telugu origin, *c* is pronounced somewhat like the English *ts* before a front vowel (*a, ā, u, ū, ŏ, o, au*). Similarly, in words originally Telugu, *j* is pronounced somewhat like the English *dz* before the same front vowels.

Ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, the nasal *ṇ* and *ḷ* are retroflex cerebral sounds, pronounced with the tongue folded back against the roof of the mouth.

ṇ like the *n* in -ing
y like the *y* in yellow
r like the *r* in drama
ś like the English *sh* but with the tongue closer to the teeth
ṣ like the English *sh*
jñ is approximately *gnya*

(Adapted from Heifetz and Narayana Rao, 1987, pp. 175–178.)

Śiva's Warriors

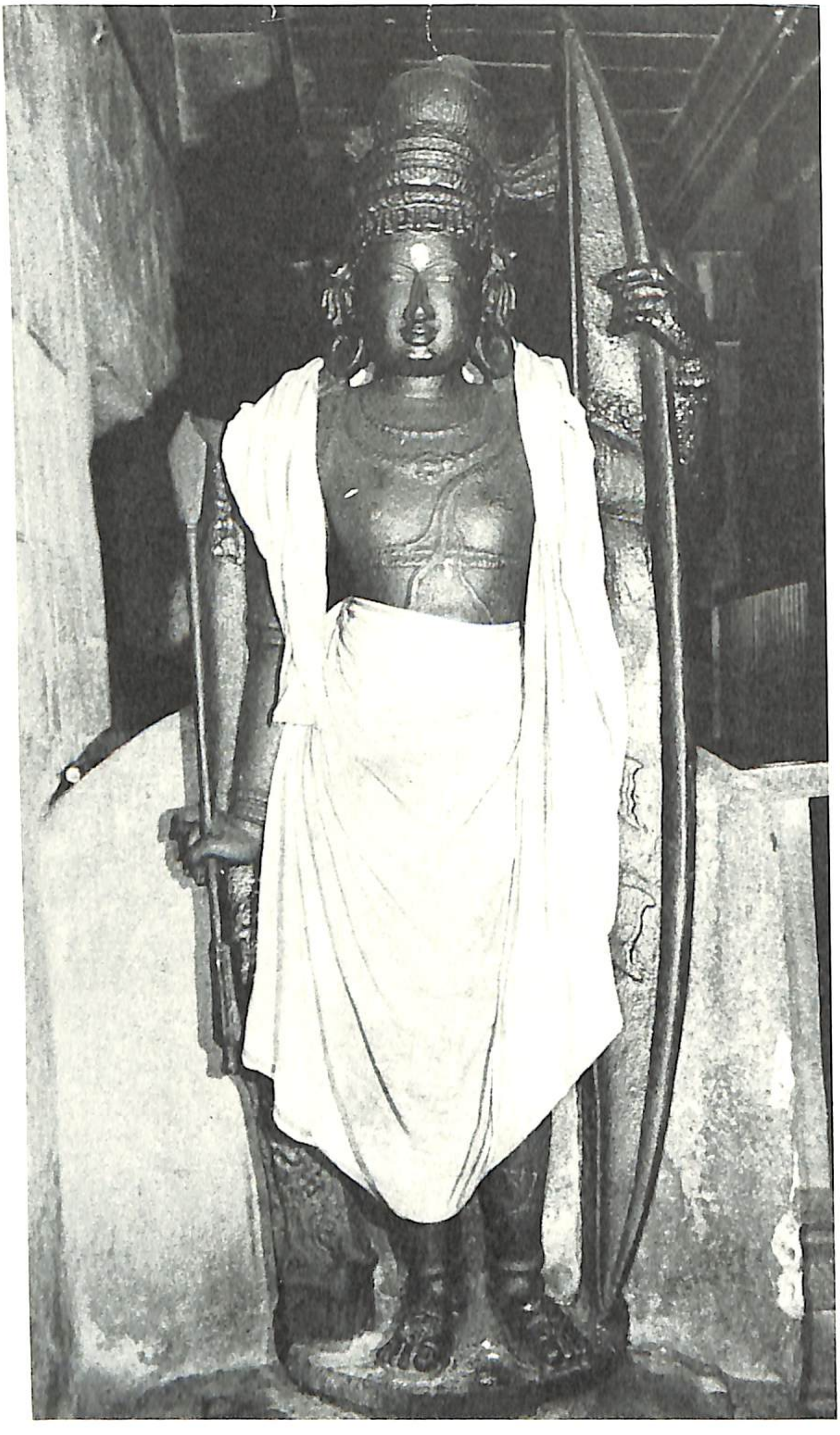

Image of Kannappa in Kāḷahastīśvara Temple at Kāḷahasti, in Andhra Pradesh, state of

INTRODUCTION

The *Basava Purāṇa* (BP), an important religious text of the Vīraśaivas (heroic Śaivas) of South India, was composed in Telugu, probably in the thirteenth century, by Pālkuriki Somanātha. It is an anthology of legends of Vīraśaiva saints known as *bhaktas* (devotees) and a hagiography of Basaveśvara, the twelfth-century leader of the Vīraśaiva movement. Vīraśaivism, also known as Liṅgayatism, is a militantly antibrahmin sectarian religion.

Legends about Somanātha's Life and Death

Although there is little reliable information about Somanātha's life (more about this later), and although Somanātha himself showed great reluctance to speak about his life—he describes himself only as a bhakta and a strict follower of the Vīraśaiva code of conduct—Somanātha has grown into a cult figure in Andhra and Karnataka. There are so many legends about the miracles and powers he demonstrated that an entire hagiographic tradition has grown around his name.

An incident involving the BP and Somanātha was related by Piḍuparti Somanātha, the poet who, some three hundred years later, rewrote the *Basava Purāṇa* in the meters of the Sanskrit *mārga* tradition: one day some Vīraśaivas were listening to a reading of the BP in a Śiva temple in Orugallu (present-day Warangal) when King Pratāpa Rudra happened to visit the temple. He asked, "What's going on here?" Brahmins who were accompanying the king told him that the Śaiva devotees were listening to a reading of the *Basava Purāṇa*. When the king asked to know more about it, an evil brahmin told the king that it was a new work composed by the sinner Pālkuriki Somanātha, who had made the couplets in *dvipada* (a popular meter) with poor caesura. This was not standard, and indeed had never been done before. Having heard this, the king left without paying any more attention to the reading.

Angered by this event, the Vīraśaivas went to Somanātha and asked his permission to kill the brahmin who had so insulted their text. Somanātha listened to their complaint and decided that if he did not take action, the honor of his devotees would not be protected. He vowed that he would have the brahmins defeated in a dispute with an ordinary human being.

Somanātha headed for the city of Warangal in a bullock cart marked with *liṅga* imprints. A group of his opponents gathered together some hooligans, dressed them up as Śaiva devotees with spurious liṅgas, and sent them to receive Somanātha at the city gate. But when the disguised hooligans bowed to Somanātha, their liṅgas became real and they turned into genuine Śaiva devotees.

Somanātha then arrived at the king's fort. At the entrance was the image of the goddess Lakṣmi. His bulls came to a halt because they, as Śiva's servants, could not respect the goddess, who was the consort of Viṣṇu. At Somanātha's command, the image fell to pieces. Hearing of this incident, the king reportedly ran to Somanātha, seeking his forgiveness and protection.

Somanātha then remained in the city for some time. When he decided to leave, he warned his devotees that shortly afterward Muslims would overrun the area. He spent his old age in the village of Kalikemu in Karnataka. At the time of his death, he sat on a heap of ashes and commanded his disciples to protect his body after he died. At the time of his death Śiva appeared before him and invited him to his abode on Kailāsa. Somanātha responded: "If you opened my grave and took me away without anybody knowing about it, people would say that I had run away. And if you did so without opening my grave, people would say that my body had rotted. So take me to Kailāsa in such a way that everyone will see that I entered your body and also that my vow not to look at a *bhavi* [non-Vīraśaiva] is not broken." Śiva took the form of a crystal bull, drew Somanātha inside the bull, and remained on the grave for a while, in full view of all the devotees.[1]

Another Telugu text, the *Pālkuriki Someśvara Purāṇamu*, narrates in addition to the above story an incident of religious dispute Somanātha had with a Vaiṣṇava scholar Cakrapāṇi Raṅganātha. Somanātha, who had vowed not to look at a non-Śaivite, consented to participate in the argument from behind a curtain. Somanātha did not even have to argue; his son Caturmukhabasaveśvara defeated Raṅganātha. The humiliated Vaiṣṇava left the city, and on his way he approached the great Śaivite religious center, Śrīśailam; there he refused to see the god Mallikārjuna inside the temple. As a result of this failure, he lost his eyesight. He then went to the Vaiṣṇavite deity Narasiṁhasvāmi at Ahobilam, who appeared in his dream and exhorted him on the superiority of Śiva. Raṅganātha returned to Śrīśailam and regained sight in one of his eyes. He came to Somanātha to ask for forgiveness, and was granted the sight in his other eye. He became a devotee of Somanātha and composed a hymn on Śiva.[2]

Somanātha's scholarly talents were eulogized by a number of Śaivite poets; among them the most articulate was Piḍuparti Somanātha, who wrote:

> Infinite power of meaning flows from his tongue
> even before he writes anything down.
> He did not have to learn the methods of meter and grammar;
> he has the skill of making poems in his mind.
> Earlier than learning the great commentary on grammar he has
> perfected his learning in Rudra commentary.
> He knew how to destroy the opponent's arguments
> without having to learn the texts on logic.
>
> Can I adequately praise Somanātha?
> He is renowned with titles such as
> the sharp spear on the skulls of Jainas
> and the hero who beheaded the evil Bijjala.[3]

The *Basava Purāṇa* in Its Literary and Social Context

The profoundly tendentious antibrahminism reflected in these legends about Somanātha is apparent in the BP itself, in the very style Somanātha chose to write in. Literary historians recognize two distinct traditions in Telugu literature, *mārga* (Sanskritic) and *deśi* (indigenous). The mārga tradition begins with Nannayya, the eleventh-century poet who retold the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* in Telugu, under the patronage of King Rājanarendra, the Eastern Cāḷukya king of Veṅgi. Nannayya, called the first poet in Telugu literature, borrowed meters from Sanskrit. The genre that he introduced, called *campū*, combines verse and prose in one common narration. In adopting this genre, Nannayya was influenced by the Kannada poet Pampa, who in the tenth century had first rendered the *Mahābhārata* into Kannada. Through his writing, Nannayya continued to popularize brahminic religion. In contrast, Pālkuriki Somanātha adopted the deśi style and composed his works in dvipada. This was a meter popular in oral tradition and was closely related to the meters of folk songs. In the prefatory remarks to the BP, Somanātha states his preference for deśi meters:

> Since beautiful, idiomatic Telugu is more commonly understood
> than heavy compositions of mixed prose and verse, I have chosen

> to compose this entirely in the dvipada meter. Let it not be said that these words are nothing but Telugu. Rather, look at them as equal to the Vedas. If you wonder how that can be, remember, "If a *tūmu* is a standard for measure, so is a *sola*." Is it not generally agreed that the stature of a poet derives from his ability to compose great poetry in simple language? (p. 44 below)

Somanātha was clearly aware of the dominant position that Sanskrit and the Sanskritic campū style enjoyed in Telugu poetry during his time. His apologetic tone in recommending his dvipada work to his listeners and readers is indicative of the beginnings of a new tradition in the face of strong opposition. In his later work, the *Paṇḍitārādhya Caritra* (PC), which was also composed in dvipada meter, the poet spoke much more confidently. In a long passage at the beginning of the PC, Somanātha describes the poetic excellence of dvipada and its worth in comparison with "noble works composed in prose and verse." He declares, punning on the name *dvi-pada* (two feet, two honors): "It is called a *dvipada* because it leads to the two honors, of this world and the other world."[4] Somanātha also refused even to mention the names of any other poets in his work. Nannayya had paid homage at the beginning of his work to the Sanskrit epic poet Vyāsa, and later poets paid respect to Nannayya, along with the other major Sanskrit and Telugu poets. Somanātha, in contrast, failed to mention any other poet, Sanskrit or Telugu. He said, instead, that he had learned his poetic art from his religious guru.

In the mārga tradition, poets borrowed their themes from a well-known source—almost always from Sanskrit—and rendered them into Telugu, which effectively discouraged the use of local themes. Not only the stories but also the authority of the mārga poets was derived from the great poets of Sanskrit such as Vyāsa and Vālmīki, who possessed the status of sages, and from those venerated Telugu poets who had begun the mārga tradition. Furthermore, the poets enjoyed the patronage of kings or other persons of royal status; it was conventional for any poet to designate the patron who had requested a poem as the chief listener of his work.

Somanātha's rejection of Sanskritic, brahminic, literary conventions was complete. He based his book on the stories of great bhaktas that were popular in oral traditions among the Vīraśaivas. He sought instruction regarding such stories from the local assembly of bhaktas rather than from a Sanskrit poet-sage. Finally, he made his friend, rather than a king, the audience for his poem. Somanātha's dissociation from previous literary tradition, therefore, marks the commencement of a new school of poetry, usually called the Śaiva school.

Somanātha emphasized his opposition to the brahminic tradition by explicitly stating that he never associated with bhavis, non-Vīraśaivas. In BP he declared: "I avoid showing respect, holding conversation, or any other kind of association with bhavis. My name is Pālkuriki Somanātha. I am a man of pure character" (p. 43). Later, in the PC, he grew even more severe:

> I reject rice produced by bhavis, food seen by them, fruit, vegetables, and leaves handled by them; I avoid their houses, lands, trees, and money; I do not see them, touch them, talk to them, or deal with them in any way in either giving or taking from them. I am known as Pālkuriki Somanātha; I am a scholar of the four Vedas.[5]

Even though Somanātha vehemently rejected brahminism and brahminic literary styles, he accepted the Vedas, the *purāṇas*, and the *śāstras*. He repeatedly stated that he was a scholar of the "four Vedas," and also asserted that Vīraśaivism was in complete conformity with the Vedas and śāstras. Throughout the BP, the PC, and his other works, there are scores of Sanskrit quotations that Somanātha says are from *śruti*, from the revealed texts, that is, the Vedas. In fact, Somanātha's quotations from Sanskrit increase in number in his later works; some chapters of the PC have a Sanskrit quote in every line of the text, so that on the whole there is more Sanskrit than Telugu. There is, indeed, no other poet in Telugu literature who has quoted so many lines from Sanskrit texts, with the result that parts of his works are more difficult to understand than the works of the mārga poets of his time.

The abundance of Sanskrit quotations and the repeated references to the Vedas, śāstras, and purāṇas would seem to indicate that Somanātha employed them more for the authority of the Sanskrit words than to document his sources. To label a religious movement antivedic was a powerful strategy adopted by brahmins to undermine the social acceptability of anything they did not like. Understandably, the Telugu Vīraśaivites attempted to avoid such attacks. Although in every detail the BP was antibrahminic, Somanātha insisted that the religious practices advocated therein closely adhere to the vedic texts. He took care, however, not to extend the respect given the texts to their chanters, the brahmins. In the seventh chapter, Kallidevayya confronts Veda-chanting brahmin scholars and tells them that his dog could chant the Vedas better than they. In an attempt to degrade the brahmins, he commands his dog to perform a chant, which the dog does (p. 235).

Vīraśaivism
and the *Basava Purāṇa*

As Somanātha describes them in the BP, the three important aspects of Vīraśaivism are *guru, liṅga,* and *jaṅgama*. Each person in the Vīraśaiva religion is initiated by a guru. The *guru-śiṣya* relationship, that between teacher and disciple, is the most powerful of any type of relationship between people. The guru initiates a devotee into the cult by putting his palm on the head of the devotee. *Hastamastakasaṁyoga,* the union of head and hand, instills the energy of Śiva (*citkaḷā*) in the body of the devotee, who is believed thereby to have taken birth from the palm of his guru. From this point onward, the devotee considers the guru as his father; he is a new person, and his past, his parentage, and all other relationships are annulled.

The guru also invests the devotee with a liṅga, a stone symbol of Śiva. The devotee must carry the liṅga around his neck at all times. Five times a day the devotee takes the liṅga off his neck, sets it in his palm, worships it, and puts it back around his neck. Any separation, even accidental, between the liṅga and the body of the devotee is considered extremely undesirable. According to Śaiva lore, devotees may kill themselves because of such accidental separation.

The liṅga worn by the devotee, called *iṣṭa liṅga,* is his or her personal deity and is superior to the liṅga in the temple. The latter is *sthāvara* (stable), whereas the liṅga on the body is *jaṅgama* (mobile). The opposition between sthāvara and jaṅgama is central to Vīraśaivism. A poem by Basavanna, in A. K. Ramanujan's exquisite translation, captures the theme:

> The rich
> will make temples for Siva.
> What shall I,
> a poor man,
> do?
>
> My legs are pillars,
> the body the shrine,
> the head a cupola of gold.
>
> Listen, O lord of the meeting rivers,
> things standing shall fall,
> but the moving ever shall stay.[6]

As Ramanujan says, the poem "dramatizes several of the themes and oppositions characteristic" of Vīraśaivism, one of which is its opposition to the temples. The iṣṭa liṅga represents the god who is in the body of the devotee as opposed to the one in the temple. To quote Ramanujan again:

> Medieval South Indian temples looked remarkably like palaces with battlements; they were richly endowed and patronized by the wealthy and the powerful, without whom the massive structures housing the bejewelled gods and sculptured pillars would not have been possible. The Vīraśaiva movement was a social upheaval by and for the poor, the low caste against the rich and the privileged; it was a rising of the unlettered against the literate pundit, flesh and blood against stone.[7]

In medieval Andhra, the "rich and privileged" meant the brahmins and the landowning castes such as *reḍḍis*, *kāpus*, and *vĕlamas*, who enjoyed a higher social status than did the traders, artisans, and other service castes. Even the brahmins, who were religiously superior, depended on the patronage of the landowner. Members of the landowning castes who did not themselves own land were entitled to share social dominance in the village because of their kinship ties to the landowners.

In a traditional village controlled by a local variant of the system of *jajmāni* (customary exchange of services), craftsmen and members of the service castes such as washers, barbers, potters, weavers, carpenters, tanners, and watchmen of cremation grounds were relegated to a socially low position and to a ritually unclean status. Also included in this group were people with socially unrespectable professions such as burglars, prostitutes, and pimps. Among the craftsmen, *kamsālis* (goldsmiths), *kammaris* (blacksmiths), *vaḍraṅgis* (carpenters)—castes that are usually included among the *pāñcālas* (five artisan castes)—and *sāles* (weavers) in particular felt themselves in conflict with brahmin claims to superiority, for they themselves had aspirations to priestly status. The goldsmiths even called themselves *viśvabrāhmaṇas*, the universal brahmins. The artisan castes have historically competed with brahmins in that jealously guarded skill, literacy. Many poets and scholars from the artisan castes have composed poetry and have claimed knowledge of religious texts. Because they were competing with brahmins, these poets and scholars imitated brahminic styles, but were in conflict with the brahmin ideology, often adapting antibrahminic religious doctrines. A large number of Vīraśaiva poets emerged from this group, and as evidence of the importance of the artisan castes in medieval Andhra, BP includes a number of stories of bhaktas from these castes.

One of the characteristics of artisan and trading castes is their mobility. Their skills are always with them; as a part of the body, skills can be carried wherever there are better opportunities to make a living. These people are not like the land-oriented castes, tied to one place by their need to earn a livelihood on the land, which is entirely external to them and totally immobile. The two groups of castes—those that live from the land and those that live by trade—have developed different styles of life, beliefs, aspirations, and world views. Whether or not they have always been in conflict with each other, these two groups of castes were separated throughout the medieval period and even into modern times. In the Tamil country they are identified as right-hand castes and left-hand castes: the landholding castes are right and the trading castes are left. Although Telugu does not have exactly equivalent labels, the ideological separation between the caste groups follows the same lines as in Tamilnadu. The bhaktas associated with the stories and legends of BP come predominantly from the left-hand castes—artisans, merchants, washermen, potters, tanners, and the like; or they come from such socially marginal groups as burglars, hunters, prostitutes, and pimps. There is not one story related to landed peasants or their low-caste *māla* (untouchable) farmhands. As a religious text of the left-handed castes, then, the BP carries a good bit of ideological baggage.

It would be interesting to relate structurally the religious symbolism of sthāvara and jaṅgama to the land and trade orientations of the right-hand and left-hand castes, respectively. Medieval Andhra and Karnataka temples were built by landowning caste leaders who sought to establish the legitimacy of their rulership as kings over their own areas. The deity in the temple was also viewed as a divine king ruling over the area, and it was from such a deity that each king derived his legitimacy. The temple itself symbolized the stability, the sovereignty, and the palatial glory of the king's house. Myths about temple deities relate the events by which the land where the temple was built came to belong to the deity. The place (*sthala*, or *kṣetra*) was seen to be as sacred as the deity who resides there. Supporting this sacred center was the brahmin, who served the god-king as his priest, minister, and adviser.

In contrast, the traders and the artisans, who had no interest in land as such, would take their god with them. Like their skills, which were part of their bodies, their god was internal to them. A religion that endowed them with a jaṅgama liṅga, a mobile god, could perfectly symbolize their aspirations.

The BP establishes the absolute superiority of the order of bhaktas, also known as jaṅgamas, as distinct from the lay community. Bhaktas are considered to be superior even to Śiva. They are never wrong and they are above any law. Among the vows Basava takes, according to the BP, are "a vow not to punish the wrongs of the devotees . . . a vow never to let Śiva win, not even in a dream; a vow always to give victory to the devotees . . . a vow never to disagree with Hara's devotees" (p. 68).

In contrast with this, the brahminic religious system does not provide the *sannyāsin* (ascetic) with superior status, either religious or social. Strictly speaking, people who renounce and become sannyāsins do not constitute a religious order. They become isolated, in a way, from the social group and operate as lone individuals. The jaṅgamas in Vīraśaivism, however, are a strong, close-knit group, a community that shares a disciplined order, with the power to control the lay section of their religion. The BP shows that the jaṅgamas have more power than the king of the land. They are involved in violent activities in total disregard for the lay ruler. Even Basava, who was himself a devotee, did not always understand the rationale for the behavior of the jaṅgamas. He could only assert the infallibility of the jaṅgamas as an act of faith.

A significant feature of *bhakti* cults is that they create their own mythology. If the cult deviates from the existing religious traditions, then the hagiography of a saint becomes the basis for a new mythology. Thus, whereas the emergence of new gods, such as Kṛṣṇa and Rāma in Hinduism, led to new hagiographic works depicting their miracles, it was only in the bhakti cults of Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism that hagiographies of saints acquired the authority of scripture.

In the BP the lives of the devotees are depicted for their efficacy and power. Basava, who is the focal point of the anthology of stories about the devotees, is depicted both as a god and as a human devotee, with all the attendant weaknesses. His descent to the earth is associated with Śiva's interest in propagating the Śaiva religion in the world. Basava is the vehicle of Śiva, the bull, who assumed human form. Toward the end of the BP, we are reminded of the divine stature of Basava when he reenters the Śiva image in the temple of Kappaḍisaṅgameśvara.

The period between these two divine incidents—his descent into the world of human beings and his final merging with Śiva—encompasses a number of events on the human level. Every one of the stories serves to privilege the visible, the here and now, rather than events of far away and long ago. During the period of his time on earth, Basava acts only as a lay devotee of Śiva who has taken a vow to protect and obey the infallible jaṅgamas. As a minister of state, Basava periodically controls and corrects the behavior of King Bijjala toward jaṅgamas. A number of stories narrate incidents involving jaṅgamas who have violated social conventions and have broken civil and criminal laws. In each instance, Bijjala wants to punish the jaṅgamas; and in each case Basava prevents the king from doing so, in recognition of the divine superiority of the jaṅgama.

Yet, on occasion, Basava himself is found to be at fault by jaṅgamas. For example, when Basava grows too proud of his own strength of devotion, and when he takes pride in himself for having composed 464,000 songs in praise of Śiva, his pride is severely censured by the jaṅgamas (see p. 139).

A strong proclivity toward violence is characteristic of many of the stories of jaṅgamas in BP. By killing, hurting, abusing, and destroying, the jaṅgamas express a steadfast allegiance to their religion. Violence is directed not only against nonbelievers but also against other devotees as punishment for accidental offenses against Śiva or his devotees. Moreover, it is also a way of exhibiting one's faith in Śiva. Devotees commit acts of self-mutilation or suicide with the same ease as they hurt others. They demonstrate their faith by decapitating themselves and then regaining life by getting their heads back onto their bodies.

The prevalence of violence in Somanātha's narrative conforms to prescriptions given by Paṇḍitārādhya. In his *Śivatattvasāramu*, Paṇḍitārādhya enjoins devotees of Śiva to adopt a set of strict principles. He states:

> One should not commit violence against any living being, but yet the sinners who abuse Śiva must be killed without hesitation. (v. 275)
>
> Books that include words accusing Śiva should immediately be burned without hesitation, and their authors should be killed. (v. 277)

Whether or not violence has characterized the actual social behavior of Vīraśaivas, the symbols of violence and hatred toward outsiders that BP generates and legitimizes can be seen as an attempt to organize a closed cult.

In brahminic religion, women are placed in the same category as the low castes. Even women of high caste are not allowed to undergo the *upanayana* (initiation) ritual considered to be the second birth, which elevates men of high castes to the status of *dvijas*, twice-born. In contrast, Vīraśaiva texts elevate women to the same status as men by including them in the initiation ceremony. In Vīraśaivism, every person, without regard to caste or sex, receives a liṅga. Paṇḍitārādhya even sanctions a woman to disobey her husband if he does not share her Vīraśaiva devotion. The BP repeats Paṇḍitārādhya's instruction, and illustrates it by the story of Vaijakavva in the sixth chapter.

Not only does the BP repeatedly insist that caste origins of a jaṅgama are irrelevant and that all jaṅgamas are, by definition, forms of Śiva, there is also a suggestion that the teaching advocates a casteless society. Even though there are no stories in the BP involving marriage between castes, there is reference to a marriage from the Vīraśaiva tradition. According to the tradition, Haraḷayya, an untouchable, marries his daughter to the brahmin Madhupayya's son. The marriage causes a major uproar and ultimately leads to the assassination of King Bijjala. Somanātha narrates the story of Bijjala's assassination in the seventh chapter, but he omits the legend about the intercaste marriage. Nor are there stories of nonhereditary occupations in the BP. The washermen, barbers, weavers, tanners, and others of low caste who are elevated to the level of devotees continue their traditional occupations and conform to the conventions prescribed for them within their castes.

Contrary to the brahminic valuesystem that regards manual work as degrading, the BP makes physical labor respectable. In many instances there are statements that emphasize and extol physical labor. An aphorism often quoted in the BP says *kāyakame kailāsamu*, "work is equal to [living with Śiva in] Kailāsa." It does not make any difference whether the profession is tanning or thieving, so long as what one does is the traditional occupation of the family and so long as the income so acquired is used in the service of jaṅgamas.

What the BP does reject is any attitude that might view service occupations as low and polluting. Maḍivālu Mācayya, a washerman, is eulogized as the purest of the pure, as Śiva incarnate. Rules of pollution related to saliva, cooked foods, and physical touch are consistently broken in the BP. Food cooked by a low-caste devotee is pure, whereas food cooked by the highest brahmin is impure. The story of Kannappa dramatically demonstrates that saliva-polluted meat, liquor, leather sandals, and other items that are normally disdained by brahmins are all acceptable to Śiva because Kannappa is his devotee.

In all these conventions of purity and impurity, the BP ridicules brahmin practices. Somanātha perceives brahmins as the authors and guardians of social ideology and directs all the opposition against the brahmin practices.

The *Basava Purāṇa* and the *Pĕriya Purāṇam*

Any study of the BP inevitably invites comparison with the Tamil *Pĕriya Purāṇam* (PP), "the great *purāṇa*." The author of PP was Cekkiḻār, a *veḷāḷa* from the Tŏṇṭai region in Tamilnadu. Historians say that he was a minister in the court of the Cola king Kulottuṅga II (A.D. 1133–1150). Both Prabhakara Sastri and C. Narayana Rao think that Somanātha did not know the PP; they appear to read Somanātha's statements about the source of his text rather literally. As mentioned earlier, Somanātha said that he had received instructions to write from the assembly of bhaktas in Śrīśailam. He says in the first chapter, "And I submitted to the assembly saying, 'I want to narrate the incomparable *Basava Purāṇa*. Kindly tell me how to handle the thread of that story and make me fulfilled' " (p. 142). Again in the seventh chapter, "I have devotedly, and to the best of my ability, told the praiseworthy story of Basava just as I heard it from the devotees. But who am I to narrate the marvelous story of the great Basava, whose story even the lord of this world is not capable of knowing?" (pp. 265–266).

The above statements indicate Somanātha's devotion and respect toward his superiors, but do not identify them as sources of his text. It was common among bhakti poets to admit inferiority on their part and to claim that everything they knew came by the grace of god or the other devotees. The earliest date that one may suggest for Somanātha's work is still several decades later than that of Cekkiḻār. There is also ample evidence to show that Somanātha knew Tamil well enough to compose poetry in that language. Somanātha used several languages—Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Marathi—in the same text, as is evidenced by his *Vṛṣādhipaśatakamu* and the PC. The language boundaries of medieval South India were far less rigid than they are now. In view of this, it is improbable that Somanātha did not know about the PP. One should also recognize, however, that stories of bhaktas were part of the oral tradition and an author did not need to consult a written text in order to write a story.

The basic narratives of the PP and the BP are very similar. The PP is a collection of hagiographies of the sixty-three Nāyaṉārs, whose stories had been popular in medieval Śaiva tradition from long before the twelfth century. The number sixty-three is a symbolic number that had been borrowed from the Jaina tradition of the sixty-three *Śalākā Puruṣas*. Śaivism, which was fiercely competing against Jainism, borrowed the style of the *Mahāpurāṇa*, also known as the *Śrī Purāṇa*, in which the sixty-three Jaina heroes were extolled. There are several Nāyaṉār stories common to the PP and the BP, although the original Tamil names of the PP may have been altered in the BP.

Although there is a considerable similarity of themes and stories between the PP and the BP, there is also one important difference between them. We noted earlier that the BP is oriented toward the left-hand castes and is antibrahmin. In contrast, the PP is oriented toward the right-hand castes and is probrahmin. The author, Cekkiḻār, comes from a landowner caste, and the PP includes a number of stories about devotees from agrarian castes, whereas, as was noted earlier, the BP does not have one story related to an agrarian-caste devotee. What is more important than that is the tone and nature of the two texts: the BP is aggressively antibrahmin, the PP is respectful to Brahmins.

The Brahminization of Vīraśaivism

Even though Vīraśaiva doctrine militated against caste hierarchy and was violently opposed to brahmin superiority, over time hierarchical social structure gradually asserted itself. The twelfth-century militancy of the movement waned, giving way to a validation of caste identities and of brahminic superiority.

Brahmin Vīraśaivas of Andhra called themselves *ārādhyas* and maintained their own caste identity. With their literary superiority and their Sanskrit skills, brahmin Śaivas came to dominate Śaiva scholarly circles. In their hands, the Vīraśaiva texts composed by Somanātha underwent a process of significant brahminization, and the original compositions of Somanātha became less popular than the later brahminized versions.

Veturi Prabhakara Sastri has hypothesized that two distinct Vīraśaiva traditions developed—that of the *Basavasampradāya* following Basaveśvara, and that of the *Ārādhyasampradāya*, following Paṇḍitārādhya. According to this hypothesis, the *Ārādhyasampradāya* is not antibrahmin. Prabhakara Sastri quotes part of a verse attributed to Paṇḍitārādhya that states:

> bhakti toḍi valapu, brāhmyambuto pŏttu pāyalenu nenu basavaliṅga
>
> I cannot give up my love for bhakti, O Basava, nor my association with brahminhood.[8]

This statement, according to the legend, is Paṇḍitārādhya's response to Basaveśvara's call to him to renounce brahminhood and join the Vīraśaivas. The statement, however, is not to be found in any written Śaiva texts. Prabhakara Sastri apparently quotes it from oral tradition.

Yet Paṇḍitārādhya's *Śivatattvasāramu* does not provide support for the claim that he has respect for brahmin rituals or brahmin superiority. Verse 134 of this book states: "If a person from a high caste and a person from a low caste accept devotion to Śiva, they are equal to one another. One should not call them high caste or low caste anymore."

Further, verse 194 asserts: "Even an untouchable, if he is a devotee of Śiva, should be treated as a brahmin, and even a brahmin, if he is opposed to Śiva, should be treated lower than an untouchable."

The legend that Paṇḍitārādhya favored brahmin superiority facilitated the emergence of brahmin Vīraśaivas with the caste name of ārādhya. The Vīraśaivas of Andhra lost the militancy against brahmins and gradually developed the same caste hierarchy as other Hindus, distinguished only by the rituals and traditions associated with Vīraśaivism. The caste names of the various Vīraśaivas attained more prominence than the name of the collective identity of their religious tradition. In present-day Andhra, even the label Vīraśaivism is not popularly used to identify their religious tradition.

The Brahminization of the *Basava Purāṇa*

With the BP begins the history of the nonbrahminic tradition of Telugu literature. At first there was a sharp contrast between it and the brahminic branch of Telugu literature that Nannayya had started. The opposition operated on many levels: religious (brahminic and Vīraśaivite), linguistic (Sanskritized Telugu and native Telugu idiom), and metrical (campū and dvipada). Somanātha's popularity among the lower castes must have been high because of his use of a popular, singable meter and his choice of the native Telugu idiom. In contrast, Nannayya's *Mahābhārata* was in a remote, high style that required a scholarly interpreter who read it for an elite group of listeners consisting of brahmins and brahminized nonbrahmins from landowning castes.

The difference between the two styles of poetry began to decrease with Tikkanna, who called himself *ubhayakavimitra*, "friend of both schools of poets." A brahminic poet who supported caste hierarchy and brahmin superiority, he combined Nannayya's campū meters with the Telugu idiom of the Śaiva poets. Tikkanna's compromise effected an important change in the course of Telugu literary history. The campū meters became acceptable to a wider group of people, and in succeeding centuries brahmin Śaiva poets rewrote the Śaiva legends in Sanskritized campū meters. Outstanding among these poets were Śrīnātha in the fifteenth century and Dhūrjaṭi in the sixteenth century; it was they who were primarily responsible for making Vīraśaiva texts acceptable to the brahmin groups. In a scholarly style heavily Sanskritized in diction, they retold Śaiva legends and incorporated brahminic elements.

Śrīnātha, for example, composed a *Paṇḍitārādhya Caritra*. Since the text is now lost, a comparison between his work and Somanātha's cannot be made. But in another work, *Haravilāsamu*, Śrīnātha tells the story of Siriyāla, which also appears in the BP. A comparison of the two versions of the story reveals Śrīnātha's brahminic emphases. Śrīnātha identifies Siriyāla as a *vaiśya*, thus referring to the fourfold hierarchy of brahminic Hinduism. He even describes Siriyāla as a member of the *varṇa* born out of the thighs of the cosmic being—a reference to the brahminic origin myth (*Rig Veda* 10.90). In addition, in Śrīnātha's version, Siriyāla performs the upanayana ritual for his son, initiating him into the twice-born status, before killing him as an offering to Śiva. Without this ceremony, he would not have been a proper offering. In contrast, it should be remembered that Somanātha vehemently opposed upanayana, and devoted a large section in the BP to describing Basava's rejection of this very ceremony.

Subtle changes such as these gradually reshaped Vīraśaiva legends in Andhra and brought them into greater accord with brahminic values. The brahminic poets who retold the BP stories also eliminated the abusive language against brahmins that Somanātha had employed so vigorously. Campū retellings of the BP stories by Śrīnātha in *Haravilāsamu* and by Dhūrjaṭi in *Śrī Kāḷahastīśvaramāhātmyamu* include no abuse of brahmins as a caste.

In line with the brahminization of BP, a Sanskrit translation eventually appeared. The colophon at the end of the text says that it was authored by Bādarāyaṇamaharṣi, and that it was a part of a conversation between Skanda and Agastya. Prabhakara Sastri has identified the sponsors of the text as the Kandukūri family of brahmin Śaivas, and has noted that the translation was probably done during the late nineteenth century. He also comments: "Many who know this Sanskrit text believe that this was the ancient text composed by Vyāsa and that the regional language texts were based on this."[9]

Somanātha's text was thus brahminized by various means, but the dvipada meter that he used has not acquired full respectability. Shortly after Somanātha's time, a nonbrahmin Vaiṣṇava author, Buddhāreḍḍi, composed a Telugu version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in dvipada meter. Despite a number of other works that followed in dvipada, both by brahmin and nonbrahmin writers, Śaivas as well as Vaiṣṇavas, the meter did not acquire respectability until the reigns of the Nāyak kings of Madurai and Tanjore. In the courts of the Nāyak kings, dvipada briefly received royal support. But soon the old prejudices again asserted themselves; an eighteenth-century verse that gained circulation as an aphorism indicates the usual feelings: "a dvipada poem, an old harlot, a drainpipe, and a miserly patron are all in one class."

The BP has been retold in a number of versions and in several languages. Bhīmakavi rendered the BP into Kannada in the fourteenth century. A later Tamil translation of the BP, of unknown date, is based upon both Somanātha's BP and the Kannada text of Bhīmakavi. A Sanskrit translation has already been mentioned.

Despite all these retellings, Somanātha's original text was generally disregarded among literate brahmin groups. These were the groups that had the greatest impact upon the course of Telugu literature, and their influence resulted in a neglect of Somanātha's BP. Although the Telugu *Mahābhārata* has received consistent scholarly attention, and numerous commentaries on the *kāvya* (poetry) literature in Telugu exist, not a single commentary on the BP has ever been written. The nonbrahmin Vīraśaivas who used the text for religious purposes lacked the resources and the support to produce scholarly commentaries.

During the nineteenth century, traditional Telugu scholarship received a significant stimulus from European—particularly English—styles of scholarship. Old manuscripts were collected, texts were critically edited, dictionaries were compiled, and histories of literature were written by a number of scholars who adopted liberal, modern views. Most of these scholars, however, also happened to be brahmins with little understanding of nonbrahminic literary styles, religious traditions, and culture. As a result, a whole area of literature, including texts such as the BP, continued to be ignored.

The new generation of scholars also relied upon a new rationale for undervaluing Somanātha, based on a medieval attitude toward purity of language. Medieval scholars believed that a grammarian purified language and made it available to the poets and scholars through his prescriptive grammar. Grammar, in this view, was considered as *śabdānuśāsana,* "language law." Only the grammarian was considered worthy to possess the divine power necessary for formulating standards of purity and correctness; everyone else, by definition, used the language incorrectly unless they were trained in the accepted standards of a divine grammarian. Pāṇini was accorded this status for Sanskrit, and it was believed that every respectable Sanskrit kāvya adhered to Pāṇini's rules. Occasional infractions constituted blemishes in the kāvya. Even the great Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa was censured by medieval scholars for violations of Pāṇini's rules.

In keeping with this viewpoint, medieval Telugu scholars believed that Nannayya was the *śabdaśāsana,* the legislator of the language. The first to compose a proper grammar of Telugu, the *Āndhraśabdacintāmaṇi,* he purified the language and established appropriate rules for the use of words in literature. Then, and only then, could he begin the task of composing the *Mahābhārata* in the Telugu language, which, by this view, had until then been in a state of chaos. The fact that the

Āndhraśabdacintāmaṇi describes only a small section of the morphological structure of the Telugu language does not seem to have made any difference; it was the idea of grammar as a śāstra, law, that mattered. It was the role of the grammarian as the *śāstrakāra*, the legislator, that had value. Literary scholars of this period generally designated any word that was not used by the infallible three poets—Nannayya (twelfth century), Tikkanna (thirteenth century), and Ĕṟṟāpragaḍa (fourteenth century)—in their Telugu *Mahābhārata* as ungrammatical and therefore altogether unacceptable.

The nineteenth-century scholars who shared the medieval beliefs about language had no difficulty in rejecting Somanātha's works as substandard. Hundreds of his words were not found in the texts of the three classical poets, and hence were unworthy. For instance, Bahujanapalli Sitaramayya, who compiled the first alphabetical dictionary for literary Telugu, did not include many of the words that appeared in the BP and other Vīraśaiva literary texts.

The unconventional use of many Telugu words in Somanātha's works has even troubled many of the more liberal scholars of the twentieth century. Although accepting in theory that language is not made or "fixed" by a grammarian, they still have not been able to agree with what they consider to be Somanātha's undisciplined use of the language. They have not realized that Somanātha followed a different but equally disciplined style of language, which only appeared deviant because it had no literary following. Thus, until recently it has been the general opinion that Somanātha and other Vīraśaiva poets were substandard.

Another reason for ignoring Somanātha centered on his poetics. Sanskrit poetics were developed for use only in the kāvyas. Brahminic scholars rigidly and, in my opinion, wrongly perceived them as applicable to all literature. The standards of *rasa* (sentiment), *bhāva* (mood), *aucitya* (propriety), *guṇa* (merit), and *doṣa* (defect) were applied indiscriminately to all traditions of literature and to all genres. Judged by such standards, Somanātha's poetry was found to be full of defects.

Thus a combination of factors, including brahminical biases, authoritarian concepts of language, and misapplied standards of poetics, culminated in the general disregard of all Vīraśaiva literature in Telugu. This attitude prevailed even long after the early antagonism against Vīraśaivism had died down.

Recent Scholarship on the *Basava Purāṇa*

Charles Philip Brown, an officer of the British East India Company, who did admirable work collecting and preserving Telugu manuscripts, commissioned the copying of the BP around 1840. In addition, Brown published three articles: "Essay on the Creed and Customs of the Jangams," "Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams," and "Account of the Basava Purāṇ, the Principal Book Used as a Religious Code by the Jangams." Brown did not share the prejudices of brahmin scholars who were his contemporaries, and so had no reservations about preserving the manuscripts of the Vīraśaivas. Because of his interest in the anthropology of religion as well as in Telugu literature, we now have a very valuable collection of copies of books from this much-neglected religious group.

Later, Kasinathuni Nageswara Rao, a Śaiva brahmin who started a Telugu-language daily newspaper, *Āndhra Patrika* (1914), took an interest in publishing forgotten Vīraśaiva works. At that time, two brahmin scholars, Cilukuri Narayana Rao and Veturi Prabhakara Sastri, were involved in researching lost texts and forgotten literature. The combination of competent scholars and an interested publisher was very fortunate. In 1926 Prabhakara Sastri edited and published the BP with a critical introduction, and in 1939 C. Narayana Rao edited the PC with a long scholarly introduction, notes, and appendices. Both Narayana Rao and Prabhakara Sastri were enlightened and liberal scholars. They examined the texts to the best of their abilities and were remarkably free from literary and religious prejudices. In the same years, Bandaru Tammayya, a devoted Vīraśaiva and an erudite scholar, dedicated his life to the study of the BP, the PC, and other texts by Somanātha. As a practicing Vīraśaiva, he had a deep personal commitment to Vīraśaiva literature. Joining this small but excellent group of scholars was Nidadavolu Venkata Rao. A professor of Telugu in Madras University, he continued the editing and interpreting of Somanātha's works and the works of other Śaiva poets. As a result of the labors of these scholars, Śaiva literature received much wider attention. Gradually, younger scholars associated with the universities in Madras and Waltair and independent researchers have begun to study and discuss the linguistic problems, literary variations, and chronological issues of Śaiva literature.

Despite the efforts of these scholars, the works of Somanātha remain problematic texts. One reason is that most of the questions that have received attention relate to chronology and literary style. The texts have remained without commentaries, and in many cases, even without decent editions printed with no typographical errors. The magnitude of the problem becomes clear when we see that the BP includes many words that have specific ritual–technical connotations, which are known today only by a few practicing Vīraśaivas. Somanātha's works are, in fact, not actively read, and do not receive as much attention as the *Mahābhārata* or the kāvya literature in Telugu. Few scholars today can claim to have read them fully.

Nevertheless, there has been one improvement in the climate of scholarly opinion. No one now disputes the greatness of Somanātha as a poet. Literary critics as well as historians of literature are perhaps too willing to accept Somanātha's greatness; they generously praise his excellence, and eulogize him as a *mahākavi*, "great poet." This praise, however, is largely of a general nature, not based on critical analysis.

Somanātha's Birthdate

Let us now turn to a consideration of the historical evidence about Pālkuriki Somanātha. Unfortunately, our information is limited, and even his birthdate is in doubt. Three practices of Telugu poets frequently help in dating books and their authors: poets often dedicated their works to a ruling king or to a well-known person about whom there is corroborative literary and inscriptional evidence; they also often mentioned the names of other poets whom they respected; and sometimes poets gave their own family history, including their caste, lineage (*gotra*), names of their parents, and other details.

Somanātha did not follow any of these practices. As we have seen, his work was not sponsored by a ruling king, and he did not mention the names of either ancient or contemporary poets. The people he mentions were devotees of the Vīraśaiva cult, about whom no reliable information is available. As a result, there is no definite evidence to establish either the period of his life or the date of his composition of the BP. The only fact that can be stated with certainty is that this text was composed after Basaveśvara achieved prominence in Karnataka as the leader of the Vīraśaiva cult. It is generally agreed that Basaveśvara lived during the twelfth century, circa A.D. 1106–1167.[10]

Telugu scholars have debated among themselves the date of Somanātha.[11] Their arguments may be broadly divided into two major schools. One, led by Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma and Nelaturi Venkata Ramanayya, holds that Somanātha's literary career spans the period 1280–1340. This would make him a contemporary of the Kākatīya king Pratāpa Rudra II. The second school, led by Bandaru Tammayya, holds that Somanātha was born in 1160 and died in 1230, which makes him a contemporary of the Kākatīya king Rudradeva, also known as Pratāpa Rudra I.

The evidence on which both schools rest their arguments is derived from Somanātha's works, works of Telugu and Kannada poets who mentioned Somanātha, and Telugu and Kannada inscriptional materials.

Tammayya's arguments are based mainly on the following three pieces of information from Somanātha's works. First, in the BP, Somanātha states that among the assembly of bhaktas who instructed him to compose the story of Basava, there was a Karasthali Somanāthayya, who "was born from the grace of Paṇḍitārādhya." [12] Tammayya interprets this phrase as referring to the initiation ritual, and it would indicate, therefore, that Paṇḍitārādhya performed the initiation ritual for Somanāthayya. Legend has it that Paṇḍitārādhya was the leader of the Vīraśaiva movement in the Telugu area and that he was a contemporary of Basaveśvara. Then Somanātha, who was a contemporary of Somanāthayya, either was a younger contemporary of Paṇḍitārādhya or was born a few years after that guru's death. Second, in the PC, a work believed to be one of his last works, Somanātha mentions that he was the disciple of Bĕlideva Vemanārādhya's grandson. (II: 550–552). Bĕlideva Vemanārādhya is identified in the "Dīkṣāprakaraṇa," the first chapter of the PC, as the one who narrated the story of Basava to Paṇḍitārādhya (I: 13–14). This would also place Somanātha two generations later than Paṇḍitārādhya, in the same general period as was indicated earlier. Third, Somanātha concludes the PC with the mention of Paṇḍitārādhya's grandsons (II: 549–552). Since he mentions them, he must have lived either during or after their time. Tammayya argues that the wording of the passage in which Paṇḍitārādhya's grandsons' names are mentioned suggests that Somanātha was their contemporary. This information constitutes enough internal evidence for Tammayya to conclude that Somanātha was born either a few years before or just after the death of Paṇḍitārādhya. In corroboration, Tammayya gives the following external evidence. The Kannada poet Somarāja, in his *Udbhaṭakāvya*, praises a "Soma, who is like a garden of the divine trees, which are the songs of praise about Basava." Somarāja gave the date of composition of his work in a verse, and according to one interpretation, it is A.D. 1222.[13] If this is accepted as authentic, then the Soma referred to in the verse could not have been anyone other than Somanātha, since there was no other poet who wrote about Basava at that time. This would indicate that by A.D. 1222 Somanātha was famous as a poet, and especially as one who composed a number of hymns on Basava, and that the BP could have been one of these hymns. Assuming that Somanātha must have been a mature scholar to have acquired such fame, Tammayya places Somanātha's birth around A.D. 1190.

The historians Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma and Nelaturi Venkata Ramanayya suggest that the BP was composed around A.D. 1290. They use the same sources as Tammayya, but interpret them differently. They do not agree with Tammayya's reading that Paṇḍitārādhya performed the initiation ritual for Karasthali Somanāthayya. They interpret the phrase "was born from the grace of Paṇḍitārādhya" as a divine blessing, which could happen at any time. They also disagree with the text of the verse from Somarāja's *Udbhaṭakāvya* given by Tammayya. There is a variant of the text, which would place the poem in A.D. 1522.[14] They also present an inscription dated A.D. 1290 concerning Reṇḍrevula Mallināthayya and Docayadevi, and consider these two names close enough to Rĕṇṭāla Mallinātha and Docamāmba, who are mentioned in the BP as contemporaries of the author, to be the same persons.[15] This inscription is taken as evidence that Somanātha composed the BP around A.D. 1290.

Cilukuri Narayana Rao says that the BP was composed around A.D. 1267.[16] His conclusion is based on two names: Viśveśācārya and Viśveśvarācārya. These names appear in several inscriptions dated from A.D. 1242 to 1267. C. Narayana Rao identifies these names with Karasthali Viśvanāthayya, the person who is mentioned in the BP as Somanātha's literary mentor.

The evidence presented by the scholars of both schools is flawed by questionable readings, impressionistic identifications, and weak logic. Hard evidence enabling anyone to argue in favor of one date or the other is not available. In its absence, one has to look for circumstantial evidence. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there must have been a sharp division between nonbrahminic Śaiva poets and brahminic poets. We can infer this from the statements of Tikkanna (ca. A.D. 1210–1290), the author of the Telugu version of the *Mahābhārata*. He was a brahminic poet, unmistakably supporting the varṇa hierarchy and vedic superiority. Yet Tikkanna, as we have seen, called himself *ubhayakavimitra*, "friend of both schools of poets." He dedicated his *Mahābhārata* to the composite deity Hariharanātha, the deity with the form of both Viṣṇu and Śiva. Such a compromise presupposes a strong Śaiva tradition in poetry. In all probability, Somanātha was the poet who led that Śaiva literary tradition with which Tikkanna had to contend. If this was the case, Somanātha either would have been a contemporary of Tikkanna or would have preceded him. In either case, Somanātha's major work cannot have been composed later than A.D. 1290. In the absence of better evidence, then, the only statement that can be made is that Somanātha must have lived between A.D. 1200 and 1300.

Somanātha's Birthplace

It is customary in both Andhra and Karnataka to use the name of a village, often an ancestral village, as the family name of a person. Somanātha's birthplace has sometimes been identified as Pālakurti, a village in the Janagama Taluk of Nalgonda District, now in Andhra Pradesh. The name Pālakurti is close enough to Somanātha's family name, Pālkuriki, to suggest that there may have been a connection between them. By contrast, Cilukuri Narayana Rao has suggested that Somanātha belonged to Hālkurki in the Tumkur Taluk of Karnataka. Since the initial *p* of old Kannada was changed to *h* in modern Kannada, it is phonetically possible that Pālakurti could have changed into Hālakurki. Other than the similarity of names, however, there is no evidence to establish any of these villages as Somanātha's birthplace.[17] Somanātha himself states in the BP and the PC that he composed both books in the Śrīśailam area, an area where he apparently lived for a long time.[18] Later Śaiva tradition associates Somanātha's death with Kalikemu, a village in Karnataka.[19]

Somanātha's Caste

Equally uncertain is the caste to which Somanātha belonged. Unlike authors of most traditional, brahminical religious and literary works, Somanātha did not mention his caste. All that he indicated in the BP, as in other places, was that he belonged to *īśvarakula*, the caste of Śiva. He regarded Śiva and Pārvati as his father and mother. In accordance with the conventions of the Vīraśaiva religion, he considered himself to have been born out of his guru's palm. He claimed that his gotra (lineage) was bhakti gotra, the lineage of devotion.[20] He did, however, give the names of his human parents: Viṣṇurāmideva, his father, and Sriyādevi, his mother. He called them his "foster parents." The names are Vaiṣṇava names, derived from Viṣṇu and Śri (Lakṣmī), which suggests that his parents did not belong to the Vīraśaiva cult. Vīraśaivas refuse even to utter the name of any deity other than Śiva. This would indicate that Somanātha's Vīraśaivism was probably the result of his own conversion. In any case, the names of his parents do not give any indication of their caste.

C. Narayana Rao, Prabhakara Sastri, Somasekhara Sarma, and Venkata Rao, all of whom are brahmins, have argued that Somanātha was a brahmin. They have insisted that the scholarship of vedic, purāṇic, and śāstra texts Somanātha exhibited in his various works is conclusive proof of his brahminic background. They have contended that vedic lore could not have been available to any person who was not himself born into a brahmin caste.[21] This argument, however, is not supported by any evidence. The Vīraśaiva jaṅgamas, who were recruited from many different castes, competed with brahmin scholars for social and religious respectability. They pursued vedic and textual learning so as to dispute with the brahmin scholars of the time. The fact that Somanātha was learned in vedic, purāṇic, and śāstra texts does not in itself prove that he was a brahmin.

A statement with caste connotations does, however, appear in the PC. Somanātha describes his listener, Sūranāmātya, as his beloved *maradi*. This kinship term indicates that Sūranāmātya was either the author's mother's brother's son or the author's father's sister's son. Sūranāmātya is described as a person belonging to the Haritasa gotra and the Āpastamba sūtra. Both are terms associated with brahmin lineage.[22]

Yet even this evidence is not conclusive. Kinship terms have been used in Andhra to express personal relationships across caste lines. Fictive family relationships have, for centuries, been traditionally popular. Brahmin Tikkanna called his patron, King Manumasiddhi, by the kinship term *māma*, "uncle," and we know that Manumasiddhi was not a brahmin. It is entirely possible that a fictive kinship relationship existed between Somanātha and Sūranāmātya, despite differences in caste.

Claims that Somanātha was a brahmin have a much older history. A hagiographic text called *Pālkuriki Someśvara Purāṇamu* associates him with the family of Bĕlideva Vemanārādhya, who is clearly identified as a brahmin in the PC.[23] There is even now a brahmin family in the Telangana area that claims that Somanātha was their ancestor and left their caste and became a jaṅgama. I believe that these stories should be read as part of the brahminization of the BP.

Bandaru Tammayya, who is a Vīraśaiva scholar from a nonbrahmin *jaṅgam* caste, argued that Somanātha was a nonbrahmin of the jaṅgam caste.[24] Jaṅgams are a literate caste who function as the priests of the Vīraśaiva nonbrahmins in present-day Andhra Pradesh. Very much like the brahmins, who composed religious texts, read the scriptures, and functioned as traditional scholars, jaṅgams have also performed scholarly and religious functions for the nonbrahmin Vīraśaivas. A number of people from this caste are scholars, poets, and singers.

Tammayya's arguments have not gained much acceptance. Prabhakara Sastri has pointed out that in early medieval Andhra there was no such caste as jaṅgam. At that time, *jaṅgama* was the name applied to an individual ascetic of the Vīraśaiva cult; only later did a caste called jaṅgam arise.[25]

The strong antibrahmin attitude of the BP itself presents an effective argument in favor of the nonbrahmin origins of Somanātha. The text appears to express a deep animosity against brahmins as such. In a number of places, Somanātha describes brahmins as *trāṭimālalu*,[66] untouchables with thread [on their shoulders]"; *brāhmaṇagardhabhambulu*, "brahmin donkeys [who carry the weight of the Vedas]"; and *karma-*

caṇḍāluru, "untouchables who have *karma*." A long story in the seventh chapter ridicules brahmins for their attempts to purify ritually and elevate a woman of the tanner caste to brahmin status. The brahmins of this story have the untouchable woman bathe in milk that has been poured into the image of a golden cow. After the ritual bath, each brahmin takes a part of the cow.[26] In this story, brahmins are not only described with utter contempt, but even their names are distorted in further attempts at ridicule. In his description of the shares of the golden cow, Somanātha uses words related to bovine anatomy drawn from the vocabulary of beef-eating castes. The literary images used in the narration depict brahmins as avaricious and unscrupulous, and even suggest that they eat beef. The expression of hatred against brahmins generated by powerful passages like this has no comparison in any other Śaiva text in Telugu. Moreover, the abusive language, vitriolic descriptions, and contemptuous utterances against brahmins that are found throughout the BP show that Somanātha's opposition to them is not merely theological.

Prabhakara Sastri argues that the antibrahminic attitude of the BP should not be attributed to the poet. Such attitudes are demanded by the subject of his work—Basaveśvara. It is he who is antibrahminic. Sastri claims that in his PC, Somanātha does not abuse brahmins. Indeed, Sastri insists that Somanātha respects brahmins in the PC, because the subject of that work—the life of Paṇḍitārādhya—is not antibrahminic.[27]

But shifting the blame of Somanātha's brahmin-hatred to Basaveśvara does not work. Although Basaveśvara was ideologically opposed to brahminism, his *vacanas* (religious lyrics) do not have any of the harsh, abusive, and violent language that Somanātha uses in the BP. Basaveśvara's lyrics evoke, rather, a mood of gentleness and compassion. And it is also not correct to say that Somanātha's PC does not abuse brahmins. There are, indeed, places in that work where brahmins are described respectfully—but only Vīraśaiva brahmins. Other brahmins are reviled with the same abusive tone as in BP: "donkeys who carry the weight of the Vedas."[28] The insults to brahmins in the BP differ from those in the PC only in degree, not in substance. By the time he wrote the PC, Somanātha was older and far more respected in his mission to propagate Vīraśaivism; when he wrote the BP, he was a young, fiery-eyed revolutionary. In the light of such vehement and unrestrained abuse directed toward brahmins, it is difficult to imagine Somanātha as a brahmin.

Although there is no evidence regarding his caste, there is room for speculation. Elaborating his ideas on how he would incorporate vedic quotations in the dvipada meter, Somanātha declares in the PC: "I will compose Telugu words with proper combinations tightly worked in meter around the vedic utterances, so that they appear like precious stones set in gold." Later in the same passage he explains: "When you set a precious stone in a ring, you cannot let the gold press on it, even slightly. I will not distort the syllabic order of a vedic utterance, because I have to fit it in the metrical order of a dvipada."[29]

Both images come from a goldsmith's work, and are rare in Telugu literature. To my knowledge, no brahminic poet ever used images from the goldsmith's craft. Images of precious stones set in gold are plenty, but they refer to the finished ornament, not to the process of its production. Goldsmiths (kamsālis) of Andhra, as we have seen, led a strong opposition to brahmins during the medieval period. Moreover, they were a highly literate caste. We may speculate, then, that Somanātha might himself have been a kamsāli. Literary images do not constitute enough evidence to prove Somanātha's caste. But they can suggest leads for further investigation in this direction. In conclusion, it seems clear that most Telugu scholars have tended to accept too easily the proposition that Somanātha was a brahmin. This position, resting on very little hard evidence, should be seriously doubted.

Somanātha's Other Works

Somanātha composed a number of works, many of which reveal his wide knowledge of Sanskrit religious texts. In addition to his well-known works in Telugu, Somanātha also wrote in Sanskrit, Kannada, Tamil, and Marathi. He is one of the few people to write with equal ease in all the languages of the area. A summary of his major works follows.[30]

Anubhavasāramu

Believed to be the earliest of Somanātha's compositions, and written in Sanskrit meters, this work appears to be conventional in its literary form. It consists of 242 verses and describes the six sacred phases (*ṣaṭsthala*) of the Vīraśaiva religion. There is no mention of Basava's name in this text, although Paṇḍitārādhya is praised. For that reason, scholars think this work was written before Somanātha came to know about Basava.

Caturvedasāramu

This book of about four hundred verses presents the essentials of Vīraśaiva religious philosophy. It contends that Vīraśaivism is the true essence of the four Vedas. Each verse in the book ends with the refrain "Basavaliṅga."

Paṇḍitārādhya Caritra

This massive work in dvipada meter relates to the hagiography of Paṇḍitārādhya. He is traditionally associated with Śivalĕṅka Mancĕnapaṇḍita and Śrīpatipaṇḍita. The three *paṇḍitas* were brahmins and leaders of a Śaiva cult that has been supposed to be different, and probrahminic. The PC itself, however, does not support that contention. In its philosophy and in its attitude toward brahmins, the PC does not differ from BP. It is composed of hagiographies of bhaktas, together with large sections of theological disputation against Jainism, Buddhism, and Brahminism. Some of the stories of Śaiva saints found in BP are repeated in this work.

A legend in the PC states that Paṇḍitārādhya traveled to Śrīśailam in order to meet Basava. When he arrived there, he was informed that Basava had died two days before. Paṇḍitārādhya, who was by then a very old man, died shortly thereafter. This legend has led scholars to believe that Paṇḍitārādhya was a contemporary of Basava.

Paṇḍitārādhya is credited with composing a number of texts in Telugu, Kannada, and Sanskrit. Except for *Śivatattvasāramu*, none of these texts is extant.

Vṛṣādhipa Śatakamu

This text comprises 108 verses. Each verse ends with the vocative refrain, "Basavā, Basavā, Basavā, Vṛṣādhipā." *Śataka* (from *śata*, "one hundred") is a popular genre in Telugu literature. It has one hundred verses (or, usually, 108 because that is an auspicious number), each ending with a *makuṭa*, "refrain."

Paṇḍitārādhya is credited with having composed the first śataka. But scholars who exclude his *Śivatattvasāramu* from the śataka category because it has more than four hundred verses without a refrain consider Somanātha to be the first śataka writer in Telugu.

The *Vṛṣādhipa Śatakamu* is a passionate prayer to Basava, which influenced later śataka writers in Telugu in their form of versification. Its style is characterized by strong rhythms and alliterations. It refers to a number of well-known Śaiva stories, and includes instructions to the bhaktas. An interesting feature of this work is that it contains several verses composed in Sanskrit, Tamil, Kannada, and Marathi, in addition to Telugu. Somanātha also wrote verses in *maṇipravāḷa*, a style that mixes Sanskrit and Telugu forms. This is a characteristically Vīraśaiva style, which the brahminic poets in Andhra rejected as altogether unacceptable.[31]

In addition to the above works, Somanātha composed a number of hymns.[32] He also wrote a number of works in Kannada and Sanskrit. His Kannada works include *Sadgururagaḍa* and *Cĕnnabasavaragaḍa*. Among his Sanskrit works are mentioned the *Rudrabhāṣya*, now lost, and the *Somanāthabhāṣya*, a work that presents the philosophy of Vīraśaivism.

Translation

The C. P. Brown manuscripts, preserved in the Madras Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, contain several texts of the BP. Of these manuscripts, No. 970 is the version that the collector and sponsor, C. P. Brown, describes as containing "various readings found in numerous manuscripts." This MS also has a summary of the BP in both Telugu and English. The English summary is in Brown's handwriting. An edition of Somanātha's BP was printed in 1896 by the Kandukuri family of brahmin Śaivas. Relying on the Brown manuscripts and the Kandukuri edition, Veturi Prabhakara Sastri published another edition in 1926. Later, in 1952, Bandaru Tammayya published another edition of the BP. None of these editions can be called critical, since, at best, these scholars simply collated the available variations of the text and arbitrarily chose one of the variants for the body of their own edition, putting the remainder in the footnotes. No information about the various recensions was given.

For this translation we have followed the text edited by Venkata Rao, since it is the best available. But we have also consulted Brown MS. No. 970, Prabhakara Sastri (1926), and Tammayya (1966), wherever there appeared to be problems in Venkata Rao's edition.

The BP is a written text, but one that closely follows the oral style of composition. It is a literary text, but is meant to be performed for a group, rather than read by an individual in privacy. Stylistically, it is almost indistinguishable from an oral text, with repetitions and fillers that are used frequently. The translation of such texts poses severe problems. The repetitions in the text have a hypnotic effect on the listener, with their sound combinations and verbal exuberances. When translated, however, they are dull and monotonous. Fortunately, Somanātha generally writes in a racy narrative style with few digressions. He also tells a story with a vigor and directness rarely matched in religious texts.

One major problem in the text, however, relates to the stylized introductory passages that Somanātha writes every time he introduces a new devotee into the story. An example is this passage (chap. 2; Venkata Rao, p. 30):

> sarvāṅgaliṅgi samsāranissaṅgi
> garvāpahāri vrāktanaśivācāri
> sāraguṇānveṣi sarasasaṁbhūṣi
> kāruṇyarāśi liṅgamanaḥpraveśi
> yagaṇitasukhaśīli yatidayāśāli
> nigamārthasamvedi nicitapramodi
> virahitobhayakarmi varaliṅgadharmi
> yarivargasamhāri yātmopakāri
> liṅgābhimāni yabhaṅgurajñāni
> sāngatyasuvidhāni satatāvadhāni
> paramānurāgi sadbhaktasaṁbhogi
> virasabhavatyāgi vimalātmayogi
> satyasallāpi prasannasvarūpi
> nityapratāpi vinirgatapāpi
> yīsvaramūrti yatīndriyavarti
> śāsvatakīrti prasādaprapūrti

The literary function of such passages in the text is mainly architectural. They provide the devotional atmosphere necessary to introduce a great person whose story the listener will soon hear. It is possible, also, for an interested scholar to expound profound messages by the use of flexible Sanskrit compounds generating multiple meanings. We have tried to be as literal as possible in translating such passages so that the framing effect is retained in translation.

Despite the interest of Somanātha in a straightforward narration of the story, he does occasionally adopt the descriptive style borrowed from oral poets. When he has occasion to mention saris in chapter III, for example, he goes on to give a long list of saris in all their varieties. Similarly, a list of musical instruments and names of melodies is presented at length in the same chapter. In both cases, we have tried to preserve details of the text by transliterating the names of the different kinds of saris, musical instruments, and melodies.

Somanātha's syntax is difficult, and in many places obscure. We have tried to make the best possible interpretation of each difficult case. If the passage is totally unintelligible, because of a corrupt text or because we did not understand what it meant, we have had to leave the passage as it was—untranslated. Such instances are indicated in the notes. We hope that future scholarly work will resolve those problems and make the text clearer.

In a number of places, our understanding of the text has been immensely facilitated by the reading in the PBP. There are instances, however, where even the PBP has not helped, partly because of the profusion of printer's errors, and also because Piḍuparti Somanātha either left out portions of the BP, or repeated the same words with no interpretation, or read the original inaccurately. With all the help available in dictionaries and in the glossaries provided by Prabhakara Sastri, C. Narayana Rao, Tammayya, and Venkata Rao, the meanings of many words remain unclear. We hope that our interpretation of them will be acceptable to scholars.

Finally, a word about the Sanskrit quotations Somanātha uses. In a number of instances, the sources of the quotations are not known. In some cases, the original form of the quotation itself is unintelligible. Intelligible quotations have been translated, and in most instances, the original form of the quotation is given in the notes.

An attempt has been made throughout to present an accurate, readable translation of Somanātha's work, without losing the quality of the original. No attempt has been made to improve upon the original, or to make it more acceptable to Western sensibilities; and no passage has been abridged or eliminated. We believe that scholars as well as general readers will find greater value in a translation that preserves the integrity of the original text.

Throughout this translation we have cited the author's name in the form Pālkuriki Somanātha. But this is by no means the only form in which his name appears in Telugu books. The author himself wrote his family name in three different forms: Pālakuriki, Pālukuriki, and Pālkuriki. His given name is variously written as Somanna, Somana, Somanātha, and Somanārādhya. Less frequently used forms of his family name are Pālakurti and Pālukurti. Modern Telugu scholars have not made any one spelling the standard. We have adopted the spelling that Prabhakara Sastri and C. Narayana Rao use in their writings.

SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Chapter I

The poet Pālkuriki Somanātha begins with some preliminary remarks. These include acknowledgment of his spiritual guru and lineage, his patron, his literary mentor and colleagues, and his fellow devotees. Geographically, he places his religious and literary activity in the Śrīśailam-Tripurāntakam area. He makes some comments on his choice of style—idiomatic Telugu in a simple meter—and states his authority, the assembly of devotees. He concludes this section with praise for Basava and an apology for his own limitations as a poet.

The story proper begins with the cosmic events leading up to Nandikeśvara's earthly birth as Basava to brahmin parents. Nārada reports to Śiva on the unfortunate status of devotion on earth. Śiva responds by telling him and Pārvati the story of the origin of Nandikeśvara, who is in no way different from Śiva himself. Śiva then sends Nandikeśvara to earth to be born as Basava.

Meanwhile, a worthy Śaivite couple dwelling in the Karṇāṭa country are childless. The woman, Mādāmba, worships Nandikeśvara and performs the necessary rituals for gaining a son. Nandikeśvara enters her womb and engages in yogic practices there during an extended pregnancy. As soon as Basava is born, Śiva comes in the form of Kūḍalisaṅgameśvara and initiates him by associating him with a liṅga.

In Basava's eighth year, his father prepares to perform his brahminical thread ceremony. Basava's refusal to undergo the ritual is a major statement of the difference between Vīraśaivism and brahminical Śaivism. Basava and his sister then leave home. Basava's maternal uncle, Baladeva, has promised to marry his daughter to a devotee, and he has his daughter married to Basava with the latter's consent. Following the marriage, Basava goes to Kappaḍisaṅgameśvara, where his guru appears to him and instructs him in the path of devotion.

Chapter II

Basava's uncle and father-in-law, Baladeva, holds the title of commander-in-chief in the court of King Bijjala of Kaḷyāṇa. When Baladeva is ready to retire, Bijjala appoints Basava to take his place. Basava accepts the position and makes a triumphant entry into the city, to which his fame has already spread. Included are catalogs of his vows, his good qualities, and his devotional activities. Here, attention turns to Basava's sister's son, Cĕnnabasava, a young man of excellent qualities and devotion who worships Basava as his guru.

Allama Prabhu comes to visit Basava and is afforded the highest hospitality. When Basava serves him a feast, Prabhu eats an exorbitant amount—enough to feed 180,000 jaṅgamas—but Basava is undaunted and prepares to offer himself as food to Allama Prabhu. Basava then tells a story about a time when Pārvati fed the *pramathas* (attendants of Śiva). This is prompted by the similarity between her plight and his own as he attempted to feed Allama Prabhu. Allama Prabhu appreciates Basava's devotion and gives him boons.

Here begins a series of stories about very ordinary things that become sacred liṅgas. The import is that with sufficient devotion, anything can be worshiped as a liṅga. The objects so transformed include eggplants, a measuring vessel, and goat droppings. These stories are followed by additional accounts of miracles brought about by the power of devotion to the liṅga, particularly that of Basava.

Lord Saṅgameśvara decides to test Basava and asks him for a third eye, but Basava outdoes him. Included in this story is a long list of the various temple servants of the time. More stories of miracles follow. These lead into the story of Siddha Rāmayya, a man of high attainments who visits the world of the pramathas and reports on what he sees there and on the high status afforded Basava. This last is recounted by a herdswoman whom Basava has, from a distance, assisted on her path.

Chapter III

Basava gives all the king's revenue to a paramour jaṅgama. When questioned, he publicly opens the coffers, and they are found to be full. On another occasion, he unwinds his wife's sari to give it to a paramour jaṅgama, but through the power of the liṅga she is never disrobed.

Innocent Saṅgayya visits a courtesan because all the paramour jaṅgamas do so. To this innocent man the courtesan is a special kind of devotee, and he watches her activities as a special kind of liṅga worship.

The innocence of Saṅgayya prompts Basava to tell the story of other innocent devotees.

Rudrapaśupati hears the story of Śiva swallowing poison, believes it, and fears for the god's well-being.

Nīla Nakka Nāyanāru banishes his wife for having blown saliva on the liṅga in an effort to get rid of a spider, but Śiva grants her his favor.

Bĕjja Mahādevi is concerned because Śiva has no mother and adopts him as her baby son. This includes tender descriptions of how a mother cares for a child.

In "The Story of Gŏḍagūci," the liṅga actually drinks milk offered by a little girl and physically absorbs her into itself when her parents do not believe the story.

Dīpadakaḷi vows to keep lamps burning for Śiva and goes so far as to burn his own hair in an effort to keep his vow.

Nāṭya Namittaṇḍi sees the twisted dancing form of Śiva (Naṭarāja) and, mistakenly believing the god has rheumatism, tries to have him cured.

Kannappa, a hunter, offers meat offerings, other polluted food, and finally his own eyes to Śiva.

The chapter ends with the story of a musician named Mādirājayya, who goes on a pilgrimage to Śrīśailam in search of Mallarasu. The story includes a lengthy section on music. It also includes a long and enigmatic description of the mountains around Śrīśailam. In the end, Mādirājayya is transported to Kaḷyāṇa, where he is worshiped by Basava. Each of the stories ends with liberation or immortality for the chief characters.

Chapter IV

Maḍivālu Mācayya, a washerman by caste, serves the jaṅgamas by washing their garments. One day he kills a man in the street who has chanced to touch the clean clothing. When people complain to King Bijjala, he, in turn, orders Mācayya to be executed. Basava protests and warns the king to leave this powerful devotee alone. When the king ignores Basava's advice and sends a mad elephant against him, Mācayya kills it and threatens the king's men.

The story of Maḍivālu Mācayya continues and serves as the frame for the entire chapter. Taken as a whole, the numerous stories contain three major themes: any action performed by a liṅga devotee is justifiable; devotion confers extraordinary powers and rewards; and excessive pride is dangerous even among devotees. A great many of the stories are drawn from the South Indian tradition of the sixty-three Nāyanārs. Others are about individuals depicted as contemporaries of Basava.

The stories of Iruvadāṇḍāri and Bāvūri Brahmayya show how King Bijjala should have responded to the death of his elephant. Bijjala is repentant, and Mācayya restores the elephant to life. Even Basava is not immune to Mācayya's temper. The latter criticizes him soundly for excessive pride, which has caused him to compose numerous songs and have them circulated. Mācayya tells the story of a weaver named Śaṅkaradāsayya. This includes numerous substories, each of which deals with the question of pride on the part of the great and the power of devotees of humble birth. Among those coming under attack, in addition to Basava, are such luminaries as a weaving contractor, Śiva himself, a Vaiṣṇavite, Siriyāla (Ciṙutŏṇḍa the man who served his own son to Śiva), and a queen who smelled a flower meant for Śiva.

Mācayya then tells the story of Ŏḍaya Nambi. Nambi is depicted as a paramour jaṅgama and Vālmīkideva (Śiva) as his confidant. Both come under attack from Miṙumiṇḍa, a staunch Śiva worshiper, and have to flee for their lives. After Nambi is humbled, Śiva teaches him the correct path, humbly meeting the devotees and singing the stories of the Nāyanārs. Most of the remainder of the chapter is taken up with stories of Nāyanārs told by Nambi—all being reported to Basava by Mācayya.

Chapter V

This chapter contains seven major stories. Whereas the general format of *Basava Purāṇa* is to present most of the tales framed within other stories, each of these is narrated by the poet himself.

Kinnara Brahmayya, a jack-of-all-trades and musician, gets involved in a dispute with a paramour over a sacrificial sheep that has sought refuge in a Śaiva temple. He kills the man and thus earns the king's wrath. In the end, Kinnara Brahmayya gains great fame for causing Tripurāntaka (Śiva) to talk.

Kalaketa Brahmayya, a juggler or magician, turns base materials into gold.

Moḷiga Mārayya, a poor woodcutter who nevertheless serves gruel to jaṅgamas every day, attracts the attention of Basava, who gives him gold. Mārayya ridicules Basava for his presumption, and Basava eventually comes to Mārayya's feet, seeking refuge.

Kannada Brahmayya, a professional thief, shows his devotion to the liṅga by robbing non-Śaivas and ultimately the king's treasure to give to the jaṅgamas.

Musiḍi Cauḍayya performs a number of miracles that center around bringing the dead back to life.

Śiva himself eats from the hand of Suriya Cauḍarasu.

Tĕlugu Jŏmmayya is a hunter who liberates animals from their curses by killing them with his arrows.

Chapter VI

Ekānta Rāmayya, a great devotee of Śiva, comes to Kaḷyāṇa and resides there in disguise. In defense of the sanctity of a Śaiva temple, he enters into an altercation with a Jain. The Jain challenges Rāmayya to give up guarding the Śaiva temple or prove the power of his devotion by decapitating himself and allowing Śiva to restore his head. This challenge prompts Rāmayya to tell several stories in which followers of Śiva are victorious over Jains or Buddhists.

Among the most fully developed of these is the story of Piḷḷa Nāyanāru or Jñānasambandhi, who bested Jains and Buddhists in the Cōḷa and Pāṇḍya country. Many of the other stories also deal with the lives of one Nāyanār or the other.

The story of Deḍara Dāsayya includes a long refutation of the Jains in the form of a philosophical-religious debate.

The story of Vaijakavva deals with the requirement that a female devotee disobey her husband if he is not a devotee. This and other stories show Jain *vasadis* being destroyed and replaced by Śaiva temples.

The story of Ekānta Rāmayya ends with the capitulation of the Jains and the destruction of all the vasadis in Kaḷyāṇa. Ṣŏḍḍaladevu Bācayya, the keeper of King Bijjala's granaries, opposes all non-Śaivas: Jains, followers of Viṣṇu, *Advaitas,* and so on. When Bijjala refuses to permit Bācayya to make a pilgrimage to Saurāṣṭra to celebrate Śivarātri, the Lord of Saurāṣṭra comes to him in Kaḷyāṇa. Basava then builds a temple in his honor. Bijjala responds by building a Viṣṇu temple, and is angered when Bācayya refuses to worship there. This prompts Basava to tell stories about others who were single-mindedly and often violently devoted to Śiva and were rewarded by the god. Finally, Bācayya elects to participate in arguments with the king and the other non-Śaivas. By citing numerous stories in their Śaiva versions, he argues against all other possible contenders for the title of God: Viṣṇu, Brahma, Veda, water, fire, wind, sun, moon, karma, and others.

Chapter VII

The brahmins go to King Bijjala and protest the growing influence of the untouchables in Kaḷyāṇa, which has resulted in the breakdown of the caste system and *dharma*. Bijjala summons Basava, and the latter responds by seating Śivanāgumayya, a devotee of untouchable caste, in a palanquin and bringing him to the court. When Bijjala rages in protest, Basava speaks out against the brahmins and in favor of the devotees.

Basava then tells a series of stories in which devotees, especially untouchables, are shown to be superior to brahmins.

Kallidevayya's low-caste maidservant takes a purifying bath because she was touched by a brahmin. When the brahmins complain, Kallidevayya makes his dog chant the Veda, thus showing that even a devotee's dog is superior to brahmins. Bibba Bācayya collects leftover *prasāda* food from the devotees. His neighbors in the brahmin colony complain against such a polluting act. They attack his cart in which the prasāda is loaded; the prasāda becomes fire and burns the brahmin houses. The brahmins beg for protection and Bācayya grants their houses be restored to them.

Mādara Dūḍayya's bath water cures a brahmin's leprosy.

Untouchable Śvapacayya covers his pot in which he is cooking meat so that a brahmin flying in the sky from his ritual power does not cast his eyes on it and pollute it. The brahmin blames the untouchable and instantly falls down, losing his power. He becomes a devotee of Śvapacayya.

Smoke from Udbhaṭa's cremation transports a king and his people to Kailāsa.

Ḍohara Kakkayya kills a brahmin purāṇa singer who reads Viṣṇu stories.

Kĕmbāvi Bhogayya feeds the meat of a dead calf to a devotee when he requests it. Brahmins in the colony attack his house and Bhogayya leaves the colony. With him go all the liṅgas of the village. When the liṅgas have left, the village becomes desolate. The brahmins beg Bhogayya to return.

Guḍḍavva, an untouchable woman suffering from leprosy, is stopped when she tries to go into a brahmin colony. She vows never to come back until the god in Saurāṣṭra gives her a healthy body. She goes toward Saurāṣṭra, walking, crawling, and finally rolling on the earth when her disease breaks her body. Śiva appears and gives her a divine body.

Basava proves the superiority of devotees by demonstrating that Śivanāgumayya's body is full of milk instead of blood.

The *boyas* (a low caste) go to the king and protest the devotees' usurpation of the prasāda offering made to Śiva, which has traditionally been theirs. Basava argues that since the prasāda has come from *prāṇa liṅgas*, the individual liṅgas worn by the devotees around their neck, and not from the temple liṅgas, the tradition does not apply. Basava then challenges them to accept deadly poisons as prasāda. The boyas refuse in terror, and agree to relinquish claims to the prasāda if Basava and his followers drink the poison-prasāda and survive. Basava accepts the challenge; he and his followers drink the poison and live happily.

Jagadeva invites his son-in-law, Basava, to a ritual observance, and he agrees to come. But Jagadeva feeds the brahmins before Basava arrives. The latter is enraged at this affront to the liṅga path, and tells stories illustrating how unswerving a devotee must be in his single-minded devotion to the liṅga: Eleśvaru Ketayya's cattle refuse to eat or drink with non-Śaivas; Savarada Nācayya drowns his second-born twin son because he has no liṅga to give him at birth. Jagadeva repents and agrees to kill a traitor against Śiva when the time comes.

He does not have to wait long. King Bijjala has the eyes of two devotees, Allayya and Madhupayya, put out unjustly, and Jagadeva is called upon to carry out his vow. When he hesitates, his mother treats him like a dog; Jagadeva therefore goes with his companions and murders the king. With the city in chaos, Basava retires to Kūḍalisaṅgameśvara, who takes him into himself.

The poet concludes with his apology and a statement of the efficacy of his composition.

Translation

CHAPTER I

He is the divine guru.[1] He is supremely endowed with worshipful qualities. He is the sun that opens the lotuses of the hearts of great yogis.[2] He is most compassionate. He absorbs the devotees' afflictions.[3] He is the manifestation of the three worlds.[4] He abides in bliss. He cures the disease of rebirth. He is delighted with devotees. He acquires the essences of Śiva for his devotees. He is forever blissful. His form is eternal. His prowess has been demonstrated. He absolves the sins of the faithful. He lights up his devotees. He is beyond thought. He is associated with right thoughts. He is popularly known to be embodied. He is boundless. He is birthless. He is without beginning or end. He conforms to the meaning of *Vedānta*.[5] He is associated with knowledge. He is supreme in bliss and knowledge. He is a slave to the devotees. He is the support of the devotees. He responds to the devotees. He is attentive to the devotees. He is the light of the devotees. He is the riches of the devotees. He is a killer of devotees' grief. He is the experience of devotees. He rescues devotees. He supports devotees. Devotees are his life breath. He is glorious. He pleases me. He is approachable through clear thoughts. He is the embodiment of consciousness. He is gentle. I worship and praise him.

My lord, Cĕnna[6] Mallikārjuna,[7] is firmly fixed in my head. I have meditated on the *pramathas*,[8] who have the same form as Śiva and who agitate the three worlds. In Śiva I see the ancient devotees[9] who have become one with the liṅga.[10] I serve the new devotees who are manifest liṅgas anointed with the essence of true devotion. Now I will spread the story of Basava throughout the earth.[11] That grand story is as follows:

Śrīśailam[12] is the throne of the great God.[13] It is the playground of Pārvati's husband.[14] It is the private abode of Hara's devotees.[15] It brings pleasure to the hearts of great yogis. It is the destroyer of human karma. It is the refuge of the gods. It is the mother of all sacred places.

At the eastern gate of that great king of mountains, shining in splendor at the apex of Mount Kumāra,[16] is Tripurāntakam.[17] Residing in Tripurāntakam is the one who is lauded as the destroyer of the Tripuras.[18] Karasthali Somanāthayya[19] is renowned as the personification of the destroyer of those cities. He flourishes as the glory of the mobile liṅga[20] with the wealth of eternal Śiva. He has the same faultless handsome form of Black Throat.[21] He is associated with the tradition of heroic vows to that god. He is a gem among the jaṅgamas.[22] He has the approval of the *śaraṇas*.[23] He acts in union with the liṅga. He has left bodily desires behind him. He was born through the grace of Paṇḍitārādhya.[24] He propagates the path of supreme devotion. He enjoys the ocean of understanding.

Mallinātha swims in the nectar ocean of Basava's compassion. He is the personification of disciplined performance of vows and observance of daily worship. He takes peerless pleasure in the assembly of devotees.[25] Rĕṇṭāla Mallinātha[26] follows the path that has been so well established by the ancient *Vedānta*, *Siddhānta*, *purāṇas*, *Vedas*, *śāstras*, and *āgamas*.[27] He worships jaṅgamas and provides them with all the riches of his body and mind. With strict discipline he has vowed not to cross the boundary of his native land.[28] He has made steps on the eastern side of Mount Kumāra.[29]

Every day, Docamāmba[30] joyfully offered five oleander[31] flowers to Hara. But one day there was one flower too few. Without hesitating, she offered her own lotus eye. Immediately Śiva gave her another incomparable eye. By this act she gained everlasting fame.

The heroic Goḍagi Tripurāri is the beloved disciple of Munnayadevayogi. He is the son of Nārayya. He is Nīlakaṇṭha's elder brother. He is sacred. His body is clean. He is praised throughout the world. He is attentive to the three gifts of the guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama.[32] And he knows the meaning of sacred texts.

One day, when these and the rest of the host of devotees were enjoying the pleasures of the empire of devotion, and flourishing with ancient glory, I fell prostrate like a stick before the glorious, innumerable *māheśvaras*.[33] I was anointed by the nectar of their compassionate devotion. And I submitted to the assembly, saying, "I want to narrate the incomparable *Basava Purāṇa*. Kindly tell me how to handle the thread of that story and make me fulfilled."

When I had submitted myself thus, praising them and desiring their help, the gathering of devotees was pleased. They looked at me affectionately, cast their kindly glances upon me, and said, "We have given you the ability to spread the *Basava Purāṇa*. Now you must compose it so that it pleases the steadfast devotees."

When they spoke, I accepted the command of the assembled devotees with great reverence. Therefore, I will now begin to compose this poem.

In a brahmin village called Gŏbbūru,[34] the diadem of the Karṇāṭa country,[35] dwells a man whose lotus feet are worshiped by the best of people who reside there. Many people gather around him because they realize that he has taken the *śāmbhava dīkṣa.*[36] He has a large group of students who have been fulfilled by receiving instruction from him in the sacred syllable.[37] He is a manifestation of bliss, truth, and consciousness. His inner lotus heart is dedicated to the servants of Śiva. He is a deserving man. He has cut the vine of birth and death. He has conquered the sensual pleasures. His character is spotless. He is capable of purifying the entire universe. He is the emperor of wise men. He has a good name. He is fully devoted. These are the remarkable things that people say about him. His name is Maṇḍĕga Mādirāju.[38]

There is also another man who has been born out of the compassionate hand of that great sage. He is a bee that feeds on the luxurious, delicate, fragrant lotus feet of his teacher. His inner lotus heart constantly shines with the likeness of that Śivayogi. He drinks water that is given with graciousness and kindness from the feet of that divine-bodied person.[39] He is devoted to his guru. He is the lord of Gŏbbūru. He pursues the supreme Śaiva path. He constantly meditates on union with the liṅga. His name is Saṅganāmātya.[40] He benefits the entire universe.

O Saṅganāmātya, when I heard you being praised in the councils of devotees, I came to you. For you are a devotee of jaṅgamas, and you alone deserve the *Basava Purāṇa*. Now listen attentively and with devotion while I compose the good poetry of the *Basava Purāṇa*.

In the sacred purāṇas,[41] it is said that "Uma[42] is our mother and Rudra is our father; "therefore, I am born of the Īśvara[43] family. I was born out of the womb-hand of the liṅga guru.[44] He is an embodiment of the *śaraṇas*, the *gaṇas*,[45] and all the other attendants of Śiva. The devotees have anointed me with their compassion. I am free of worldly bonds. I belong to the devotee *gotra*.[46] The brilliant Viṣṇurāmideva and the illustrious Śriyādevi[47] love me as their son. I am dedicated to the heroic *māheśvara* tradition. I am a honeybee on the lotus feet of Kaṭṭakūri Potidevara, the renowned devotee. I gained the power to compose poetry from Karasthali Viśvanātha,[48] the compassionate devotee. I am a bosom friend[49] of Cĕnna Rāma, the eminent student of Vaḍagāmu Rāmeśa. I avoid showing respect, holding conversation, or any other kind of association with bhavis.[50] My name is Pālkuriki Somanātha. I am a man of pure character.

Since beautiful, idiomatic Telugu is more commonly understood than heavy compositions of mixed prose and verse, I have chosen to compose this entirely in the dvipada meter.[51] Let it not be said that these words are nothing but Telugu. Rather, look at them as equal to the Vedas. If you wonder how that can be, remember, if a *tūmu* is a standard of measure, so is *sola*.[52] Is it not generally agreed that the stature of a poet derives from his ability to create great poetry from simple words?[53]

The underlying strength of this work is my fixation on Basava. The collection of songs that are sung about the ancient devotees are in accordance with the Vedas and purāṇas.[54] The songs are also acceptable to the esoteric theory of the liṅga.[55] They will be my original. I will compose this poem by using the story of Basava as a thread to string together the beads that are the stories of the ancient devotees.[56] Do not say that it is wrong to get involved with describing Basava, whose body is actually the incomparable liṅga as a separate individual. Such a description is conducive to the development of devotion.

If one takes refuge in Basava, his sins are destroyed. If one takes refuge in Basava, he is purified. If one takes refuge in Basava, he experiences immediate pleasure. If one takes refuge in Basava, he becomes a devotee. If one takes refuge in Basava, all his entanglements are unraveled. If one takes refuge in Basava, he gains riches. If one takes refuge in Basava, his character improves. If one takes refuge in Basava, calamities are averted. If one takes refuge in Basava, he acquires riches. If one takes refuge in Basava, he becomes famous. If one takes refuge in Basava, all his desires are fulfilled. If one takes refuge in Basava, he gains the power of speech. If one takes refuge in Basava, his intellect flourishes.

Whoever recites the three syllables that are included in this word, *Ba-sa-va*, will have his mouth fixed upon Śiva. Is it surprising that the entanglements of birth and death disappear when one praises Basava? Is Basava nothing more than a devotee? Three Eyes[57] came in his form. Is it proper—simply because he was born on this earth—to call Basava a human being?

When Hara is without a body, Basava has a body. When Hara has a body, Basava becomes a śaraṇa and is inseparable from him. When the transcendent God manifests as a śaraṇa, Basava becomes one of the supreme devotees and worships him. When the liṅga takes the form of a devotee, Basava takes an individual form and serves him.

Basava himself knows the form of the supreme soul. And the supreme lord knows the form of Basava. Having acquired his world, his companionship, and his form, it may be possible to attain union with Śiva. But can anyone else become Basava?[58]

To the lord, Basava is the chief of the pramathas. To the jaṅgamas, he is the equable devotee. To Liṅgadeva,[59] Basava is a dear friend. To the host of jaṅgamas, he is a well-known servant. To Īśvara, Basava is the vehicle on which he rides. To the lord's devotees, he is a throne. To Black Throat,[60] Basava is a sword. He is a mirror in the devotees' hands.[61]

Can anyone adequately praise Basava? Can anyone know Basava? His relationship to the mobile liṅgas is like the fragrance in a flower. Therefore, it is clearly impossible—even for gods and demons—to define Basava.

My praise may be like the praise of a lover for his beloved. It may be like telling a man who has hoisted a flag announcing ten million[62] to live like a man who is a master of ten thousand. It may be like setting up lampposts to illuminate the sun. Or it may be like offering Bhava the leaves and flowers that he himself has created. Is it possible to find words of praise for the refuge of the devotees?

Nevertheless, for the good of the world and to the extent of my own learning, I will describe him as best I can. My aim will be to please the best of the Śaiva poets, those who are famous for their appreciation of the nine sentiments.[63] Why even bother to mention those others who speak falteringly? Their learning is a waste; their names have perished with their false pride. It is said that a poet can see everything. But that does not hold true if one is ignorant of Mṛḍa's[64] greatness. Thus I ignore all the bad poets[65] and praise Basava with vigor. This is how the story goes.

The Beginning of the Story

You are an auspicious and admirable embodiment of devotion. Ministers bow down to you! Your name is Saṅga!

On the silver mountain, Kāma Killer[66] and Uma enjoyed themselves in amorous play and pleasures of good stories. They were attended by those who are at one with Śiva: Upamanyu, Bhṛṅgi, Nandi, and the other pramathas.

Nārada Goes to Kailāsa

Sensing when the time was right, Nārada, the leader of the sages, approached and fell prostrate so that all his limbs touched the ground. As he bowed with folded hands, ready to tell what was happening in all the worlds and nonworlds, Śiva recognized him with a glance and surveyed him with his moonbeam eye.[67] At an appropriate time, Ambikādevi,[68] with Śiva's consent, beckoned to him and said, "You have returned from your mission. Now give Śiva an accurate report of all the news."

Nārada Tells Śiva What Is Happening on Earth

Then the great sage stood in front of Mahāliṅgadeva,[69] folded his lotus hands, and said, "O husband of Uma, all the affairs of the worlds and nonworlds are, as always, devoted to you. But in the human world there is a problem with the way devotion is being conducted. Some of the people are so strongly committed to the Śaiva tradition that they don't even talk with bhavis. Although they live in the world, some people do not know the pain of the world. Others are so transported by bliss that they are completely lost to the world. Finally, there are those who have reached the pinnacle of devotion and have transcended their bodies. For these reasons, O Lord, no one understands either the beginning or the end of devotion to you. The people of the world will become rich in devotion; they will have their doubts removed; and they will be established in their specific phases of liṅga, jaṅgama, and prasāda[70] if they have visible evidence of your presence. Graciously come and purify the world; rule the world of devotion."

Śiva Tells Pārvati about Nandikeśvara[71]

When Nārada had spoken, the God of gods had compassion and spoke these words: "There is no difference between Nandikeśvara and myself. I will send him in my place. Through him the world will be sanctified and gain understanding."

When she heard this, the daughter of the king of the mountain looked at the lord, folded her lotus hands, and said, "You say that there is no difference between you and Nandikeśvara? Are you just saying that because you have no body except for the devotees?[72] Or does he really, as an individual, have the same body as you have?"

While Nārada listened, the birthless god answered Ambika's question. "Yes! Yes, that is true, compassionate Lotus Eyes. It is true that my body is the devotees. But listen! I will tell you something more. He and I actually are the same. I'll tell you how this came about, Lotus Eyes. I will tell you the story," he said.

The Austerities of Śilāda[73]

"For countless eons a great ascetic named Śilāda performed austerities on the southwest slopes of Śrīśailam. For thirty million years his food consisted of roots, air, water, moonbeams, and sunshine. Then for another billion years, he ate nothing but a tiny stone a day. A single desire drove him to these terrible austerities.

"Finally we stood before him and said, 'What do you wish? Ask, and we will give it to you.'

"At that he fell prostrate before us and uttered the one desire that was in his heart: 'All-knower! Lord of Living Creatures! Śaṅkara! Śarva! Lord of the Universe! Permanent One! Śāmba! Listen to me! You are accessible through the Veda and Vedānta! Listen to my request! You are easy on your dependents! Great God! You have the form of the liṅga! Lord, by your grace I lack nothing. Nevertheless, great giver, I will make just one request. Give me a son. Let him be a devotee and make him exactly like yourself!'

"Listen, Lotus Eyes! As soon as I heard his request, I was prepared to give him exactly what he desired. But Śilāda did not move. Again he fell to the earth, bowed to me, and said, 'Birthless god, give me the kind of son that I desire. But if he lacks even one atom of devotion to you, I will cut off his head. And I will do so even if you try to stop me! Give me a son on that condition. If it has to be any other way, I don't want your boon!'

Śiva Grants Śilāda a Boon

"When I heard this request, I was pleased by his great devotion. The bull is a part of myself. He existed even before the first creation. In the image of *dharma,* he walks on four feet in the *kṛta* age. Like dharma, he walks on three feet in the *treta* age. In the *dvāpara* age, at one with dharma, he walks the earth on two feet. In the *kali* age,[74] he moves about on just one foot. Because he has the shape of dharma itself, he benefits the whole universe. But that is not all. He has also come to be regarded as a second Śambhu.[75] He has become my vehicle. He has become chief of the pramathas. And he has become the lord of the cattle.

"I looked at the king of the bulls and said, 'Be born to Śilāda. And take the name Nandīśa. Either you or I have to be born. All of the pramatha gaṇas are images of dharma. Nevertheless, because I love you, I have endowed you with the most devotion to me. Śilāda has said that he does not want a son unless he is a great devotee. I must not fail to give him the boon that I have promised. Now do as I have commanded. Be born on the earth as a second Śambhu.'

" 'Let it be so,' he said.

The Birth of Nandikeśvara

"And so he was born—without passing through a womb. And he was called Nandikeśvara.

"At his birth he was devoted to me. Even before his birth he began to think of me. He was suckled on the nectar of supreme truth. Meditation on his guru's feet was his butter. The first words that he spoke were Vedānta. His deeds were the ancient Śaiva path. With my lotus feet in his heart, taken with devotion, he spent the entire cold season standing up to his cheeks in fast-flowing rivers. With just one toe on the ground, he turned his lotus face to the sky. As the rain fell in torrents, he stood contentedly and unshaken. Again, with his head on the earth, he raised his two legs to the sky. He stood in the middle of five fires.[76] It grieves the mind to think of it. It shatters the mouth to speak of it. If you had seen it, your eyelids would have burned. He stood constantly in the burning sun.

"The earth shook. The seas dried up. The sun and moon set. The tortoise was frightened. The cardinal elephants[77] were destroyed. The directions sank. The cardinal mountains shrank. The king of serpents fell. The lords of the directions were frightened. The whole sky was alarmed. The lord of speech[78] was agitated. The sacrifices were disturbed. Hari[79] trembled. The universes tumbled. Meteorites rolled on the earth. The gods were afraid. Unbelievably courageous and fearsome were the austerities that Nandikeśvara performed. It was amazing.

"Aja and Acyuta[80] were confused and frightened. The gods were distressed. With haste they approached us, fell prostrate before us, folded their hands, and praised us, saying, 'God! Lord of gods! The gods worship you! You are the diadem of the gods! Great lord! Great soul! Supreme being! Other! Śaṅkara! You further the good fortunes of Brahma and the other gods! You are the enemy of sins! You are without birth! You are indestructible! You know everything! You alone protect the entire universe! You destroyed Dakṣa's sacrifice![81] You are most capable!'

"Then we gazed with smiling eyes on Acyuta and the others, and said, 'What makes you grieve so? You act silly and confused like animals. Have you come because you are alarmed by these new austerities that Nandikeśvara is performing? O husband of Śrī,[82] does he care anything for your position? Brahma, does he want your minor post? O Devendra,[83] has he even heard of the position that you have accepted? But why should we go on talking about such things? He doesn't even think of my own position. He thinks only of me. By my devotees, I swear that this is true.'

"By speaking kindly to them I hoped to allay their fears. Then, accompanied by all of them, I went and stood before Nandikeśvara. Once there, it was readily apparent that he was already contemplating me in his heart. Nandikeśvara was astonished and pleased. His devotion tripled. His heart rejoiced. And he fell prostrate so that his forehead touched my lotus feet. Tears of joy filled his eyes. His hair bristled. His voice quivered. He folded his hands. And he thought of me.

"As he praised me, I said, 'I appreciate what you have done, and I want to give you a boon. Ask me for whatever you wish, Nandikeśvara.'

"A smile lighted up his face, and he uttered these incomparable words: 'When a person possesses a treasure, does he ask for dirt? Can there be anyone so foolish that he could ask you for anything else? I don't want positions and such things. God, all I want is to be wholly devoted to you.'

"At that point I engulfed him in a tight embrace and said, 'Henceforth you will be my vehicle. In this way the touch of your body will be a soft experience for me every day. In the beginning you were my vehicle, O king of bulls who is praised in the scriptures. Then I gave him the title chief of the pramathas. And I gave him the power to know everything.

"At that point Śrīdhara,[84] Aja, Devendra, and the other gods fell prostrate on the earth, folded their hands, praised Nandikeśvara, and asked him for refuge. He, in turn, smiled compassionately and looked with half-closed lotus eyes at the gods who had bowed before him. And his look assuaged their fears.

"The southwest corner of Śrīśailam is the most sacred. It is a great source of purification. Because of Nandikeśvara's remarkable austerities, it is now known as the land of Nandi. Lotus Eyes, I grant *apavarga*[85] to all living beings who abide in that place. Those who compose the story of Nandikeśvara and those who listen to it, alike, will have steadfast minds. They will have power to see the unseen. And their speech will be pure and full of devotion. Whatever form Nandikeśvara might take, he can never be anyone else but me."

When the lord of the universe had made this decree, the mother of the universe folded her hands before him, looked at Nandikeśvara, and said respectfully, "Who else has such humility, such pure conduct, such endless devotion, such commanding power, such consummate scholarship, such perennial truthfulness, such tenderness, such a true soul, such a spotless character, such a sacred lineage, such an auspicious form, and such good fame? All these are impossible for anyone other than you. O Lord! Lord of all, can anyone else be like you? Can anyone who is not born with a part of you in him be so dear to you?"

When he heard the words that the daughter of the mountain spoke, the lord of the universe was very pleased. He looked at Nārada and said, "Have you heard about the grandeur, the power, and the fame of Nandikeśvara?"

Then he looked at Nandi and floated him on the ocean of his compassion. And Nandi looked down and appeared fearful, a little shy, and pleased. Tears of joy spilled from his eyes. His body thrilled. His heart palpitated. His hands went to his forehead. As he praised the lord, Śiva beckoned to Lord Nandikeśvara with his hand and his eyes.

Śiva Sends Nandikeśvara to the World to Be Born as Basaveśvara

With friendliness and compassion, Ambika's husband kindly said, "Devotion has its origin in *śruti*[86] and *smṛti*.[87] It follows dharma. It is the pure tradition. It is the essence of *tattvas*.[88] It is the supreme tattva. It is the fulfillment of action. It is the original path. Thus, through you it has been recognized in the world of humans. Because of our affection for you, we have taught you our pure essence more clearly than we have taught it to the pramathas or even to Lady Pārvati. The name All-knower is not just casually applied to you. It accurately describes you.

"Therefore, go to the mortal world and attain the stature of a second Śambhu. Take the name Basava and purify the mortal world for the welfare of the inhabitants, for the welfare of the devotees, and for our own pleasure."

With that, Nandikeśvara folded his hands and said to the God of gods, "I have taken your command upon my head. And I will carry out your orders. Is there any further need for you to repeat yourself? O benefactor of the three worlds, has anyone else created the mortal world? What difference does it make if I remain here? What difference does it make if I go there? What does it matter wherever I might be? Wherever I am, I reside in you!"

When Nandikeśvara had spoken thus, the lord of the universe said, "I myself will take the form of the great liṅga[89] and I will make you a devotee of the supreme tattva. I will become the prāṇa liṅga[90] and dwell in your limbs. I will take the form of a jaṅgama and move about with you. To avoid wasting the wealth of your body and mind, I will become one with you. O world sanctifier, you are the life breath of my pramathas. And they are the life breath of my life breath. And we are not separated, at any time. Don't you know this?" Thus did he comfort him.

His entire body became like hands that bowed to Śaṅkara. And he stood before him and said, "I will do just as you say." Then Nandikeśvara fell prostrate and established the glorious Śiva, the companion of the pramathas, in his soul. As he did so, the world of men quickly drew nigh.

Meanwhile, here on the eastern flank of Śrīśailam was a praiseworthy place called the Karṇāṭa country. In this great place, which is famous for its devotion, in a brahmin village known as Hinguḷeśvara-Bhāgavāṭi,[91] were a famous man known as Maṇḍĕga Mādirāju and his obedient wife, Mādāmba. She was enriched by continuously worshiping Śiva. She was fulfilled. She was a chaste wife. She was the chief lady of that entire area. She was a good woman, and her person was endowed with dharma. She had more wealth than anyone else had but she had no sons.

She grieved because she had laboriously performed all the ordinary rituals[92] but had not yet given birth to a son. The elders then searched all the books and gave the good woman complete instructions for the ritual that she needed to perform. They said that her most tender desires would be satisfied by the Nandikeśvara ritual.

Following the advice of these great souls, she went to the temple. There she looked at Nandikeśvara, fell prostrate on the earth, and said, "You know all, Nandikeśvara! You are an ocean of compassion!"

When she had worshiped him thus, she bowed down to Nandi again and devotedly performed the prescribed rituals. She began on a Monday. For nine days she diligently performed the rituals. After that she bathed him, offered him sandalwood paste and flowers, and swathed his body completely in soft clothes. She also provided him with fine ornaments, large ankle bells, anklets, and bells. She covered his horns and hooves with gold. She affixed a medallion on his forehead. After decorating him, she offered him sacred rice, incense, and lamps. Then she fed him the five foods.[93] In front of him she heaped up a mass of rice and mung beans. She mixed sugar with clarified butter and offered that to him. Joyfully she worshiped all the crowds of māheśvaras.

She said, "Lord Nandi! Lord Nandi! You are lord of the nine bulls![94] You carry Moon Bearer![95] My brother! My father! You are the lord of the cows! Bless me with a son who is a true devotee, like you, and I will affectionately give him your name!"

Nandi publicly gave the remainder of the offering to Mādāmba. She received this prasāda[96] and smeared it tenderly on her heart, her face, and her forehead. After that she bowed and returned to her home. And as she went along, good omens appeared before her.

With greater love than ever before, the delighted husband and wife enjoyed each other.

Nandikeśvara, who had meanwhile been sent to the earth by Moon Bearer, was amazed. He thought, "This is precisely the purpose for which I have come. This lady wants me to be her son! What can I say? The very thing that she wants to happen is now about to take place."

As he entered into the woman's womb, she missed her period. Signs of pregnancy appeared. She was not hungry. Perhaps it was because she carried a son who was equal to Nectar Rays.[97] She lost her taste for ordinary things. Perhaps it was because she carried a child with a taste for great devotion. Her body became pale. Perhaps it was because she carried in her womb a child who had the form of White Colored.[98] She found bhavi food repulsive and vomited it up. Perhaps it was because her pregnancy was of divine origin. She began to yawn. Perhaps it was because she grew tired of waiting for the delivery of her son. She slept and slept as if in the yogic trance of Śiva. Perhaps it was because Lord Śiva was inside her. Her nipples darkened. Perhaps it was because Black Neck was in her belly. Her waist lost its slimness. Perhaps it was because Śiva's large body was in her womb. Her walk lost its briskness. Perhaps it was because the greatest of yogis was in her belly.

Slowly her womb grew twice as large as it had been. And slowly it grew even bigger. She carried the Lord Nandi a full nine months. Tenderly he flourished inside her womb.

The woman's womb was like the inside of a cave. It was an excellent place for deep meditation. He seated himself in the lotus posture,[99] purified his soul, and then began to purify the elements.[100] He shook the pot and sprinkled the water around. Somehow he kindled a fire. Ashes did not gather, nor did it smoke. He did not even blow but he lit a lamp. With the lamp he burned the interior of his house without setting fire to the roof.

Friends and enemies alike said, "Mother, he has not even set his foot on the earth. Is there another boy like this in the entire universe?"

They all feared to stay in their places and fled. Meanwhile, he ran past the four-petaled lotus. He stood on the ground of Trikūṭa. He woke up the sleeping serpent. Quickly he gained the six-petaled lotus. He reached the ten-petaled lotus and moved on to the twelve-petaled lotus. After he had enjoyed himself amid the blissful comforts of the sixteen-petaled lotus, he established himself in the two-petaled lotus and gained the bliss of being and understanding. Placing the six upside-down lotuses in front of him, he looked upward and enjoyed the hum that is born of the western pipe and that is like a strung bow. As he knelt on the mountain, he was filled with joy and stretched forward. He faced the brilliance that emanated from the thousand-petaled downward-facing lotus and became divine.[101] Blissfully drinking the sixteen different brilliant shades of the moon's nectar rays, he took the form of the ultimate light and shone with his own brilliance. Like a lamp shining in the womb-house of a big stone image, he shone brilliantly in the womb of the pale woman. In this manner the son remained in his mother's womb, involved in meditating on Śiva, for three years.

Weighed down by the burden of her son, the woman became very tired. So she returned to the temple of Nandikeśvara, which she had visited before, and said, "Lord of all the world, rejecting all kinds of rituals, I have taken refuge in you! How can you do this to me? I take refuge in you, and you give me a son who causes me nothing but grief. Lucky are the women who are pregnant for nine months, and give birth to sons. Three years have gone by now. Do you want to put me to even more trouble? I really don't know what to think of this. It is impossible to give birth to this boy, and my womb has become like a crab's.[102] I've had enough of your boons. I don't want anything more from you. Will you get this pregnancy over with? I don't know what heights this is going to lift me to. What kind of pregnancy is this, anyway?"

After lingering there for a time, she grew tired and returned to her house. Worn out, she lay down on her bed and smeared sandal paste on her body to cool it. Then she closed her eyes and went to sleep. As if in a dream, the lord of the bulls appeared to her. Disguised as a jaṅgama liṅga, he commanded her, saying, "O lotus-eyed lady, I have come because I want to relieve your distress. The child in your womb is no ordinary son. He is no less than the purifier of the whole world. He is the primal bull. He is the son of Śilāda. He is going to be born to you by the command of the God of gods. His birth will be for the benefit of the devotees. I have made myself clear. Grieve no more. You will give birth to a son. As soon as he is born, you must affectionately name him Basava."

When he had finished speaking to her, she awoke, opened her eyes, and looked around. But she did not see anyone. "Nandikeśvara himself must have come here. Now I can go on living. Today my life is fruitful," she said. And she floated on an ocean of joy.

Then her friends and relatives listened to her with surprise while she told them the wonderful story of the dream.

Meanwhile, the self-lit supreme light[103] himself addressed the great soul who was in the lady's womb: "Have you forgotten why you have come?"

Understanding what was meant, the true devotee fell prostrate without delay. With hands folded the dear boy emerged from his mother's womb. When the child was only half-born,[104] who bears the crescent moon on his forehead came secretly from inside the child and performed the full ritual of associating a body with a liṅga.[105]

"No one knows which path the ascetic came on. And we know not whence he has come," said the people of the house. As they watched him with amazement, the distinguishing characteristics of Mṛḍa glimmered through the locks of his tangled hair.

He wore a lower cloth of white silk. He was adorned with garlands of precious *rudrākṣa* beads, copper earrings, and a blanket of gems. He carried a yogi's armrest. In one hand he held an umbrella and a container of sacred ashes. Three stripes were on the ashes that covered his fine body. His teeth shone brightly. His beard was regular and neatly trimmed. Disguised as an ascetic, the king of ascetics affectionately said to Mādāmba, "I always reside here in Kappaḍisaṅgameśvara. And I will tell you why. My name is Kūḍalisaṅgameśvara.[106] I stay in this temple, and I never move about. This boy was my son in a previous birth. Now, for the benefit of the world, he has been born to you. This is the reason why I have come here to see him in this birth. Hereafter I shall be his guru. I promise that you will never feed this boy even a morsel of food that has not already been offered to the liṅga."

When Kāma Killer had disappeared, the engulfing darkness, which had once been so thick that it could not be pierced with the point of a needle and included the darkness of all the people's ignorance, left without a trace. It was dispelled by the light of the boy whose brilliance outshone ten million young suns. With the coming of this dawn, everything became bright. And the sun itself lost its brilliance.

When the father and mother saw their son, they floated on an ocean of love. They sent word to all the devotees to come. Together they devotedly bowed down. Then they gave him a throne and betel with sacred ash. They held his feet and washed them. They smeared ash on his forehead. And they sprinkled ash on his body. They played the five great musical instruments.[107] And they called this pure-souled son Basava.

While the father and mother watched with delight, the son gazed at the lamp and laughed as if to say, "What kind of brilliance do you have? I see that there is a shadow cast behind you."

He nursed as if immersed in the act of receiving food that had been offered to the liṅga. He sucked his fingers as if tasting the freshly collected nectar of Śiva's bliss. He looked amazed as if transported by his meditation on Śiva's feet. He flailed his arms as if enjoying himself after throwing away the material world. He looked startled, as if suddenly realizing that the mission he had come on was already delayed. He cried and shed many tears as if weeping with the pleasure of looking at Bhava. He listened as if he were attentive to the agony of the bhavis, who are caught in the cycle of death and rebirth. He turned over as if falling prostrate at his elders' feet. He lifted his head as if the dormant, pure devotion to Śiva were raising its head again. He sat like a man practicing the difficult lotus posture. Proudly he swayed back and forth as if aware that he was Nandi, the second Śambhu. He stood like a personification of the whole heroic māheśvara tradition. He bravely took faltering steps as if trying to set foot on the ancient path without a misstep. He babbled baby talk as if the very mention of Malahara[108] had caused him to choke up. He ran and skipped and played as if to say that the devotees of Śiva are the only mighty ones. Even in the midst of his childish play, he always worshiped Śiva. Even at this tender age, he already had fully developed mental faculties. He always regarded the devotees as Śiva himself. Having taken the form of the all-knowing bull, he innately possessed all knowledge and skills.

In the eighth year after the child's conception, on an auspicious day, his father, being devoid of devotion, got enthusiastic about performing his thread ceremony.[109]

Basaveśvara's Refusal of the Thread Ceremony and His Argument with His Father

Then Basava spoke to his father: "Just what do you expect to gain by performing this thread ceremony? How can you possibly worship Śiva and still be such a fool? You already have the supreme soul as your guru; aren't you going to create a hell for yourself by worshiping evil human beings? Once a person has been purified in a previous birth, isn't it degrading to become a twice-born in this life? Isn't it a sin to go through a ritual rebirth when one is already the offspring of a compassionate guru?[110] Isn't it a mistake to offer oblations of clarified butter[111] in a fire once a person has worshiped his guru's feet? Isn't it a sin to learn other mantras once you know the mantra that is the soul of Śiva? Isn't it wrong to worship these thread-polluted brahmins[112] with the same hands that worship the devotees of Śiva? Why should a person tie himself up again with cords of karma[113] after severing the bonds of karma? Tell me, how is it possible to wear mean symbols again after once donning rudrākṣa,[114] ashes, and the other distinguishing marks?

"As for me, I am far beyond the fetters that bind. I have already taken the heroic māheśvara vow. And I have rooted out the two kinds of karma. Is it right for you to try to drown me once again in this ocean of karma?

"You are blind! That is the only conceivable explanation for your desire to perform a thread ceremony for Basava. Basava has decapitated Brahma,[115] and he has been born among pramathas; how can you take him to be of the lineage of Brahma?

"Once a person has gone beyond caste and lineage, and once he has been born to a good guru, why should you again make him dependent upon caste and clan? How can you even decide on a caste for a devotee of Abhava,[116] who makes no distinction according to caste?[117]

"No matter how you look at it, I should not go through with this thread ceremony! What is the point of talking about it any longer?"

When Basava's father heard his son's words, he said, "Basava, listen to the brahmin way. The āgamas[118] prescribe sixteen rituals, beginning with purification in the womb. If even one of these rituals is omitted, a man has no place among the first rank of the highest caste. How can you even question this? Furthermore, Nandi, who is a Rudra gaṇa, plays an important role in the thread ceremony.[119] And the mantra itself says that Bharga is the deity![120] When the initiate goes begging, he wears all the marks Śiva himself wears. His thread is like the fearsome serpents. His begging bowl is the skull that Śiva holds. His *pālāśa*[121] stick is Viṣṇu's backbone. The wisps of hair he wears on a newly shorn head symbolize Śiva's matted hair. His antelope skin is the elephant's hide. The mark on his forehead is the ashes.[122] In fact, it is impossible to become a brahmin without donning this garb, which is the same as Śiva's. So how can the brahmin path be wrong for a devotee of Īśa?

"Does the thread ceremony nullify devotion? I think you are just talking like this because you are young. And we don't need any more of your childish talk! Do what we have told you to do, and do it now! We have never before heard such strange ideas. We gave birth to you, and naturally we thought that you were a good son, and that everything would turn out well. And so we were enjoying ourselves. But now it looks as if you have come to destroy our family. How do you think up these things, my son? When a child is born for the benefit of a family, the family flourishes. When a child is born to destroy a family, the family is lost. You have taken a grub hoe to the very roots of the whole family. When they hear about this, the other brahmins will outcaste me.

"If we persist in holding on to you, our family will become nothing better than immoral savages. How can you expect us to give up our caste for your sake? We have tried to be reasonable with you; if you don't want to listen to us, then take your devotion and go fall where you will!"

When Basava heard his father's angry and accusing words, he, too, became boiling mad and said, "How can you speak of brahminism and devotion in the same breath! Brahminism is a completely separate teaching. It has a different god and a different mantra; it has a different preceptor and a different costume. Brahminical meditation is different, and so is its ritual. The tradition and the path are both different.

"Do you really mean to deny that what I say is true? Your own scriptures say of the *gāyatrī* that fire is its face; Brahma is its head; Rudra is its topknot; Hari is its belly; prāṇa[123] and the other winds are its life breath; the earth is its womb; and its color is white. Is this anything like the three-eyed god? The gāyatrī is of the lineage of Sāṅkhyāyana; it has twenty-four syllables,[124] and it has three feet, six stomachs, and five heads. Just listen to what I am saying, and then tell me whether or not your god is different!

"This is nothing but Sāṅkhyāyana philosophy.[125] It recognizes no God! It has diverse forms! Its teacher was stupefied by rituals! Its only mantra is the gāyatrī! And daily ritual binds one to karma and the dress is totally different. Can this be a source of liberation?

"Now, listen to the path of devotion to Kāma Killer. It is beyond the six systems of philosophy. Śruti has commended it as the all-seeing.[126] Its subtle form is beyond praise. Its eternally blissful form is the beginning of the beginning. The form of that divine liṅga is the true God. The guru of the creed is an embodiment of kindness and compassion. He places God in your soul, and he also places God in your hand. It is accurate to say that no one is superior to the guru.[127] He is the original form of everything. The six-syllabled mantra[128]—the supreme mantra—is its mantra. The dress—locks of hair, ashes, and rudrākṣa beads—place a man beyond the cycle of birth and death. It follows the path of liberation. It is the sword that can cut the sins that are caused by earthly birth. From seeing the devotees who follow the rare eight-limbed path,[129] all your sins will disappear. You will acquire the lady of liberation. This is the result! Hereafter you will have the divine pleasure of serving the feet of the liṅga. Can śruti itself even describe such results? This path offers nothing less than liberation in this lifetime.

"Therefore, regard this path as separate. Never think of brahminism and devotion to Bhava as the same! It is true that there are several different teachings, but is it possible to mix one with another? Does binding oneself with ropes of karma result in the bliss of union with Īśvara? Furthermore, even if you persist in claiming that the paths of karma and Śiva are the same, what you say does not hold true for the devotees of Forehead Eye.[130] Simply by thinking of other gods, a devotee would enter into two hundred eighty million hells. Even the śrutis say that. A brahmin must worship the lord of the day, the purifier,[131] the guardians of the cardinal directions, Hari, Brahma, all the other gods, at the three junctures of the day.[132] If he fails to follow that form of worship, he ceases to be a brahmin. If he follows that form of worship, devotion is dead. So how can a brahmin be a devotee? And how can a devotee become a brahmin? No matter what you say, if you plant a mango seed in the earth, it cannot grow up to be a margosa tree.[133] Devotion consists of merging oneself very naturally into the liṅga. To serve many gods is to follow the path of brahminism. Devotion is like the stability of a married woman; the path of brāhmaṇism is like that of a harlot. Shouldn't one always behave like Nandi? If one learned the mantra that says that the first god is the only divine being, and dressed oneself like Rudra, one should behave like Rudra.

"Is it right to worship many gods when the lord of all is the god of the house? But there is really no point in saying all of this. Is it at all likely that these earthly brahmins, who have been cursed by Gautama, Dadhīci,[134] and Vyāsa, will ever acquire devotion? Don't think that I was just excited when I spoke, for I have not strayed from the truth out of an excess of devotion! What I am telling you is rooted in śruti and smṛti. Don't think that these are mere empty words. The way I see it, brahminism is the path of karma. Does it have roots in pure devotion to Śiva? If you persist in taking brahminism as your own path, I will have nothing further to do with you. Even if a songbird is raised by crows, it will not caw like a crow.[135] Who is my mother, and who is my father? You have strayed from what is right and just. Who are you to me? Henceforth, I will say that Cĕnnayya is my grandfather, and Cerama is my father. And I will be the son of my uncle Kakkayya.[136] Happily for me, I am on the path of true devotion. Śiva is my seven means of support.[137] You be yourself, and I'll be myself, and we will leave it at that."

Basaveśvara's Marriage

Basava and his sister Nāgamāmba[138] realized that it would not be good for them to remain at home any longer. So they left that place and went to the house of Phaṇihāri.[139] Everyone was surprised at this and wondered what was going on.

Meanwhile, Mādāmba's brother,[140] a good man, had come to attend the thread ceremony. He was a devotee of the white-bodied god,[141] and he was employed as Bijjala's[142] treasurer. His name was Baladeva, and he was also the commander of the army. Now he remembered the promise he had made to marry his daughter to a devotee of Śiva; and he remembered how he had resolved never to give her to a bhavi. So he said to himself, "If I fail to give my daughter to such a devotee as this, to whom shall I ever give her?"

With that, he approached young Basava, joyfully offered him his daughter, bowed down, and said, "Marry my daughter and protect me, Basava, for you are a paragon of the māheśvaras."

After making this request and obtaining Basava's consent, he had the city decorated with gems, mirrors, and cloth festoons. "Sprinkle the streets with musk and make designs out of pearls. Invite all the devotees. Then go forth and meet the guests and escort them to the city," he said.

Baladeva went out to meet the people who came from one direction, and he bowed down to the people who came from the other. He seated them on thrones, and he washed the feet of those destroyers of karma. He gave them flowers and offered them lamps and incense. After prostrating himself before these lofty souls, he gave them ashes and betel. He also arranged for entertainment stick dances, dancing girls, gymnasts, tumblers, sporting events, and other delights.

Shouts of "cāgu! baḷā!" filled the sky. In one corner were resounding ensembles of *vīṇas*[143] and many other types of instruments. Some of the singers sang songs of joy; some sang hymns to Śaṅkara. Some of the devotees of Śiva sang hymns and danced to them, clapping their hands. Others expounded the meaning of the Vedas from the ancient hymns of praise. Transported by Śiva, some experienced unbounded bliss. Some danced with abandon, reaching for the sky. Some bowed their heads and slept peacefully, forgetting themselves in the bliss of Śiva.

The whole multitude of māheśvaras joyfully served Basavayya, and he was anointed by the water from their feet. He put on a divine suit of clothes, smeared ashes lightly over his body, drew three lines on his forehead, decorated his hair with flowers that had been offered to Śiva, adorned himself with strands of rudrākṣa, and strapped on the dagger that is named *liṅgapasāyita*.[144]

As he shed tears of bliss and his body thrilled, he happily bowed down and said, "I have found crowds of devotees' sandals." Being hesitant to show his feet to his teachers, he squatted and hid them behind himself as he touched the ground. He pressed his elbows against his thighs and folded his hands. He was elated and remained slightly bent over. As if resuming his former divine bull form, he watched everything with unblinking eyes.

Baladeva, the commander of the army, saw Basava all adorned with complete devotion, and said, "How fortunate I am." Then he brought his daughter, Gaṅgāmba, the best of young ladies, a sea of erotic pleasure, and had her bow down before the devotees. The female devotees of Śiva greeted her with propitious ceremonies and threw rice on her. At an auspicious moment, when Śiva's strength was at its zenith, Baladeva, the commander of the army, had his dear daughter married to Basava according to the prescriptions of the Śaiva tradition and the Vedas.

The people said:

"Isn't this the way it ought to be done?"

"This is the way it was always done in the past. Don't try to be innovative; this is the only path."

"They say that without the strength of Hara's devotees, both Hari and Brahma would fall down, and thrive if they have their strength."

"So, don't be concerned with the strength or weakness of the moon and the stars and the planets. The compassionate glance of the devotees is enough to make the time auspicious. Their blessing is a match for the strength of all the planets."

"See how kindly the devotees look at Basava!"

"Has there ever been such a marriage?"

The whole world was amazed, and everyone gathered around and praised them without exception.

Basava Goes to Kappaḍisaṅgameśvara

When Basava had performed all the ritual services to their satisfaction, he fell prostrate on the ground, folded his hands before the eminent devotees, and said, "Nearby, in Saṅgameśvara, is my lord and guru. I would like to go now and worship his auspicious feet. Have mercy on me."

Saying these words, Basava, his wife, and his sister set out, and Baladeva saw them off. As soon as Basava saw the place in the distance, he began to meditate on his guru's feet. When his guru's dwelling came into view, he prostrated himself with every step. From the time that he first spotted it, for the entire distance, even though it was a whole *yojana*,[145] he kept bowing down.

Everyone praised him, saying, "He has always been devoted to Śiva, so devotion to a guru is nothing new for him." And he entered the city, praising his guru.

The power of that place is so great that not even the king of the serpents[146] can adequately praise it. All of its rivers have sacred water. All of its caves are abodes of Hara. All of its mountains are gold mountains.[147] All the trees bear rudrākṣa. All the groves are full of flowering trees. All the mines produce ash. All the ponds are filled with lotuses. All the cows are all-giving cows. In that place all the young bulls are Nandis. All the houses are pedestals with beautiful designs. All the adults are devotees. The young are all born on the earth with a purpose. All the women are single-mindedly devoted to their husbands. All the earth is equal to sacred Avimukta.[148] People talk only about the essential truth. Every cry of theirs is a celebration in music and song. Even if one searches for them, he will find no liars, no fallen men, no evildoers, no ill-born, no aggressors, no half-castes, no one without devotion, no fools, and no one who speaks falsely. Even if one searched for them as one searches for medicine, there would be none.

In Kappaḍisaṅgameśvara, which has been praised like this, Basava went to the temple of Kūḍalisaṅgameśvara. When the devotees came forward to meet him, he stood in front of the temple and fell prostrate at the feet of the image of his liṅga guru. With the sounds of pure vedic and purāṇic praises, he praised him.

Saṅgayyadeva Manifests before Basava[149]

God Saṅgayyadeva manifested in his ancient form. He emerged and revealed himself outside the temple. Basava was surprised by this appearance of his liṅga guru. His mind was in a state of confusion: filled with joy, fear, and devotion. At once he fell prostrate. While joy swept over him, he washed his guru's feet with tears of bliss. He worshiped his guru, and he offered himself to him. As Basava fell down before him, the nectar of compassion flowed from the corners of his guru's eyes.

The guru warmly embraced his son and asked him to get up. As Basava bowed before him, all the movements of his eyes adorned him. Pleased with his son's true devotion, he gave him prasāda, and said, "I am pleased with the good things that I have been hearing about your character. O Basava, do not deviate from your good devotion. O Basava, when you see bad qualities in Śūli's[150] devotees, accept them as good qualities. O Basava, treat enemies as friends if they wear the liṅga. O Basava, even if your life is in danger, you must not forget the vows that you have taken. O Basava, the supreme path requires that you not even ask the caste of other devotees. O Basava, there are people who speak ill of devotion to the enemy of Kāma. You must, like death itself, cut them down. O Basava, proclaim the devotion that has been derived from the essence of the Vedas and śāstras. O Basava, even if devotees should curse you, beat you, or put their feet on your head, you must say, 'I take refuge in you!' O Basava, I tell you that it is wrong to look at other women. O Basava, regard any foodstuff that is not the prasāda of devotees as excrement. O Basava, it is the apex of good qualities never to deceive the best of devotees. O Basava, always regard a jaṅgama as myself, and take prasāda from him. O Basava, praise the devotees of Śiva so that your tongue will enjoy the sweet taste of the words. O Basava, if ever you want anything, or if ever you are in trouble, do not forget us. Sometimes Śiva may deceive you, but you must never forget your vows. O Basava, do not deviate from the path of truth."

In these soft, sweet words he exhorted his son. Then, after embracing his son and receiving his obeisance, the guru reentered the temple and returned to his usual state.

Everyone was very surprised and said, "This must be the god with the moon on his forehead. Can he possibly be a mortal? Has anyone ever before seen this sage at the temple? What a great devotee Basava must be! Saṅgameśvara himself came out of the temple in the form of a sage, taught him, and returned to his usual state."

When they saw these great deeds, they joyfully praised him, saying, "O great man! Our elder brother! Young Basava! Great man! Our father! Increaser of devotion! Hurrah! O Basava! Form of Nandi! Hurrah! O Basavayya! You are respected in all the three worlds. These are what the fruits of birth should be. What is our own reason for living? Among the ancient devotees some attained union with Śiva by killing their sons, or by giving away their clothes, or by handing over their wives, or by killing their fathers. But now Basava has publicly gotten Śiva's grace in this manner."

While they praised him, Basava lovingly praised the devotees, who gave audience to him on the front porch of the temple of Kūḍalisaṅgayya.[151] Praising them with well-chosen words, he worshiped the guru three times a day.

You have expanded through your acquaintance with the meaning of the *Basava Purāṇa.*[152] You smelled the fragrance of the meaning of the *Basava Purāṇa*. You dearly love the many names of Basava. You enjoy chanting the names of Basava. You are a bee that enjoys the fragrant lotus feet of Basava. You bear the lotus feet of Basava on your head. You deserve the good fortune of the compassion of Basava. You possess the riches of the compassion of Basava. You are a bosom friend of the good devotees who are close to Basava. Your name is Saṅga.

This is the work of[153] the good poet and fortunate soul Pālkuriki Somanātha, who enjoys the fragrance of the lotus feet of the innumerable māheśvaras and who is immersed in the ambrosial ocean of pleasure that is derived from the blessings of the jaṅgama liṅga. It has benefited greatly from the poetic spirit graciously bestowed by Karasthali Viśvanātha.

This is the first chapter of the story that is known as the *Basava Purāṇa*.

CHAPTER II

O Minister Saṅga, you blissfully revel in the contemplation and churning[1] of the liṅga.

Baladeva, the commander-in-chief and treasurer, was preeminent among the supreme devotees of Śiva in Kaḷyāṇa. The pramathas gave their hearty approval when he gave his daughter in marriage to Basava. At their bidding, Baladeva, in the course of time, joined the pramathas.[2]

Bijjala Makes Basaveśvara His Commander-in-Chief

Bijjala called the friends and relatives of his minister, Baladeva, and said, "Does his sister have a son who is capable of filling his position?"[3]

In response to the king's question, they said, "Yes, great king, there is someone. He is Baladeva's son-in-law. He is a man of humble speech. He is capable of supporting the entire realm. He has avoided committing sins. His arms are strong. He is an expert in all the arts. He is known to be in Saṅgameśvara's good graces. He is ideally suited to be your prime minister."

When he heard this, Bijjala was as delighted as if he were the king of the entire world. At once he sent the ministers and advisers from his palace, along with the royal elephant on which he rode, to bring Basava. They went joyfully to Saṅgameśvara, and there they found the peerless Basava.

When they had fallen prostrate before him, they said, "You have no use for freedom from rebirth or the pleasures of heaven. The joy of devotion to Śiva is accessible to you, and these are not something that you relish. Nevertheless, you do care about the welfare of the world. If only for that reason, you should accede to our request. If you do this favor for King Bijjala, won't he rule the entire world? Is anyone else capable of handling the ministry, the empire, the diplomacy and strategy, the role of confidant, the position of treasurer, and the king's entire realm? The king himself is hardly worthy of accepting a handful of food from you. You are the real lord of this world. Please come!"[4]

When he heard their request, Basava thought of the welfare of the devotees. And he publicly said, "Let it be so." Then, worshiping the devotees of Kāma Killer and being buoyed up by their compassion, he went to Kaḷyāṇa.[5]

Basaveśvara Enters the City of Kaḷyāṇa

Bijjala heard the people shouting, "He has come! He has come!"

He was elated and went out to meet Basava. He ordered the city of Kaḷyāṇa to be decorated for a space of twelve *āmaḍas*[6] around. When it was all decorated, he set out joyfully, accompanied by the lords of the districts, the vassals, the chief men of the realm, the military commanders, and the elephants and horses. Their tramping feet shook the earth. The din of all the musical instruments mounted up to the sky.

The king looked out and saw young Basava. He was adorned with great devotion. His form was peerless. He was a philosopher. He was a peerless hero. He kept sensual pleasures at a distance. He had conquered the world. He recognized nonworldly values. He followed the jaṅgama path. He supported good people. He had the dignity of the liṅga. He was beyond physical desires. He was on Śiva's pure path. He scorned the three defilements.[7] He was a man of principle. He was courageous. He was disinterested in the life of this world. He was an incarnation of heroism. He had suppressed his ego. He dwelt in devotion. He was the essence of devotion to Śiva. He was a man of distinction. He was a great hero. He was a repository of tolerance. He moved in humility. He followed the good path. His body was pure. He was a destroyer of evildoers. He wore a necklace of good qualities. His sword cut the roots of sin. He was friendly and helpful. He was adorned with great compassion. He was a destroyer of sin. He had the syllable *om* in his heart. He lifted up the fallen. He was a servant of śruti. He transcended the darkness of ignorance. He destroyed his enemies. He followed the lawful path. He had a good and unsullied name. He was truthful. He sought after good qualities. He was the form of the eternal.

When Bijjala saw Basava, he walked forth to meet him. Very tenderly and affectionately he afforded him all the courtesies that are due to a guest. Joyfully Bijjala, the lord of the earth, made him commander of 7,000 rutted elephants, 12,000 fine horses, 1,200,000 footmen, and twelve subordinate treasurers. He gave Basava the authority to take control of his entire realm. And he accompanied Basava, the commander-in-chief, as he came followed by his retinue.

Auspicious women[8] and courtesans alike looked happily at the pure-hearted Basava and said:

"My dear lady, I have come to see him."

"Come quickly. Don't spoil the fun."

"Go back! You will be exposed to bad air!"

"What of it? Why shouldn't I go?"

"Go ahead, then; I don't want to go with you."

"I'll just follow along in your footsteps."

"My lady, will your husband ever forgive you if you go out like this?"

"Let him scold me as much as he likes. I don't care if he sees me."

"Listen, I am not going to go back until I have seen Basava."

"Don't act so smart! Cover up with your veil and come on."

"Why shouldn't you take me along with you?"

"Don't mingle with the crowds. You are an innocent woman."

"Walk straight ahead, and don't look from side to side!"

"Why are you so pushy?"

"This is the spiritual power of Basava!"

"Let's go and see the devotees!"

"Has there ever before been fun like this?"

"Don't delay. Come quickly."

"Lotus eyes, can you see Basava?"

"I have seen him! And I have seen liberation!"

"Delicate lady, have you seen him yet? Can we go now?"

"Wait, I am still looking at him."

Some women just took a quick look, and some stayed and watched for a long time. Some gave him gifts of clothes, and some just glanced at him and went on their way. Some brought ashes and betel leaves and gave them to Basava. The women gave him all kinds of flowers, offered him flame offerings, and bowed down to the earth. There were those who sang their good wishes, saying, "O Śaṅkara, may you live long." And there were those who praised him with beautiful songs, verse, and prose. Some spontaneously sang praises. Some just hung around. In order to escape the confusion, some of the women climbed up to the housetops and watched from there.

Among those on the housetops, a bold young woman motioned to the beautiful women around her and said, "Listen to the sounds of the musical instruments, the drums, and the double drums. Look at the Nandi dancers[9] who shout as they dance. There are the advance troops. There are heroes mounted on chargers as white as white umbrellas. Watch. Look where I am pointing! Those happy-looking people are dancing the stick dance in the most remarkable ways. There are the people who serve Kūḍali Tripurāntaka.[10] There are some people from Sonnalikapuram[11] playing golden cymbals and dancing in a group. Those people perform the *peraṇi* dance according to the tradition maintained by the Lord of Saurāṣṭra.[12] Look at those delighted people who are dancing *pratijoka*. They dance in the service of Kūḍalisaṅgayya. There are people who sing as they jump *gajjeparuvu*[13] on bows. They are from the court of Rāyuḍu.[14] There is Bijjala. Behind him is a troop of chargers and in front of him is a group of māheśvaras mounted on elephants. Can you see the young Basava? There he is, mounted on a royal elephant. The nails of its feet are adorned by the gems in the crowns of the ministers who are bowing down. Basava has his eyes only on the devotees of Śiva and constantly bows humbly to them from the shade of the shining umbrellas made of pearls and precious gems. He is a great sage. He is compassionate. He is an emperor of valor. He is an ocean of compassion. He is a blessing. He has true modesty. He is ever watchful. He is steadfast. He is adorned with good devotion. He is a heroic devotee."

They all looked where she pointed, and bowed down.

Then another young lady said to the first, "Lotus eyes, he is nothing less than the personification of Nandīśa. He himself is the purifier of the three worlds. He is the dear son of Mādavva of Bhāgavāḍa.[15] She was blessed with him after performing many rituals. My dear, he is the one to whom our minister, Baladeva, eagerly gave his daughter. Good woman, he is the one who is praised throughout the three worlds. He is the one who prompted Saṅgayyadeva[16] to talk. He has also gained the king's respect. Just to see him is a festival to the eyes. To praise him is a delight to the tongue. We are fulfilled, and our lives have become fruitful by seeing him today."

While the people talked, asked, and praised, the procession reached the city. Then the king entered the gates of his house, accompanied by Basava and a select group of soldiers and ministers. In the middle of his palace he gave Basava a seat that was higher than those of the previous twelve ministers.[17]

When the king had given him fine clothing and jewels, he addressed Basava and said, "Henceforth, you are in charge of the welfare of this entire empire. Not only that, Basava, you are the lord of my own wealth and my life. I trust you." Thus spoke King Bijjala.

"Śiva protects the entire world, and it is not a big thing to watch over the likes of you. All you have to do is be humble to us liṅga devotees. It is not a big matter to rule over this realm. I will make you the king of all the land up to the ocean," said Basava, the commander-in-chief. And his words were reassuring to the king.

Then Bijjala gave Basava more gifts of clothes and bid him goodbye. When this was done, Basava took his group of devotees, made the palaces of Baladeva his home, and began to perform his duties. With a mind that found joy in the worship of the liṅga and with a good character, he flourished day by day. And he carefully watched over the king's realm.

Basaveśvara's Vows

As his fame spread throughout the lands, this is what he strove for, and these were his vows: a vow to celebrate every Śivarātri;[18] a vow to regard every devotee of Śiva as Śiva; a vow not to punish the wrongs of devotees; a vow not to mention the caste of devotees;[19] a vow not to ask for anything, not even from Mṛḍa; a vow never to refuse a request; a vow never to cheat anyone, not even an ant's worth; a vow not to stir before granting a request; a vow to speak as he thought; a vow to act as he spoke; a vow never to go back on his word; a vow never to ask others to relax from their adamant vows; a vow never to follow the wrong path; a vow never to give up; a vow never to deviate from being a servant;[20] a vow never to let Śiva win, not even in a dream;[21] a vow to always give victory to the devotees; a vow never to look at other women; a vow never to covet another man's money; a vow never to blame others; a vow never to gossip about other people's secrets; a vow to destroy other religions; a vow to destroy those who follow other philosophies; a vow never to listen to anyone who blames Hara; a vow never to touch anything that has not first been offered to Hara's attendants; a vow never to disagree with Hara's devotees; a vow to make the jaṅgama equal to the prāṇa liṅga;[22] a vow never to ask favors of fools; a vow never to bow down to bhavis; a vow never to give anything to bhavis; a vow never to give in to worldly pains; a vow never to submit to sensual pleasures; a vow to crush the six enemies of life;[23] a vow to acquire the kind of devotion depicted in the Vedas; a vow to cause the ancient tradition of Śaiva worship to flourish; a vow to ask for refuge[24] even if his head were removed from his body; a vow to bow down even if his body were removed from his head; a vow not to retreat from attack; and a vow to honor these vows.

Only Basava knows Basava's character. Is it possible for anyone else to talk about it? He is a bundle of courage. He is a heap of dignity. He is a resource of essential meaning. He is the heat of the fire of knowledge. He is a field full of vows. He is the soil of famous devotion. He is the yield of vows. He is the house of renunciation. He is the source of truth. He is a lake of grace. He is the height of good deeds. He is a raft over the ocean of evil. He is the measure of Vedānta. He is the pinnacle of knowledge. He enjoys the sacred syllable. He is the pivot of bliss. He is the source of peace. He is the strength that Īśvara has built. He has the passions under control. He has the strength of eternity. He is totally humble. He is a castle of wisdom. He is the abode of affection. He is supremely noble. He is a vine of essential truth. He is the heartwood of greatness. He is the backbone of existence. And he is the grace of the court.

The Devotees Go to See Basaveśvara

"Is he a mere devotee?" asked the people as they came to see him and demonstrate the sincerity of their vows.

Some came to honor their previous commitments. Some came to make new vows. Some came to see for themselves whether he was really a devotee or whether he was just a famous man. Some came with the hope of being worshiped by Basava. Some came with the expectation that the mere sight of Basava would intensify their devotion to Śiva. Some came like a throng of mendicants visiting a sacred place. Some came mounted on elephants. Some came on horses. Some came in palanquins or other types of vehicles. Some had rudrākṣa beads around their necks. Some had their bodies coated with ashes. Some had turbans wound around their heads. Some wore their hair in great matted locks. Some wore the supreme liṅga at their waists, on their arms, necks, heads, and chests. Some had made incomparable vows, praised by those who had control over their passions. Some were people of sterling character. Some rejected every other kind of food. Some shunned all discourse and any involvement with bhavis. Some constantly meditated on Śiva. Some kept all their senses focused on unity with Śiva. Some longed for the bliss that accompanies pure experience of the liṅga. Some revealed their symbols, and some kept their symbols hidden.

There were dancers and singers. There were many who were skilled at expressing the nine types of sentiments.[25] There were art experts, scholars, debaters, logicians, poets, philosophers, and followers of the vedic path. When they all gathered together, the earth seemed as if it tilted to one side. As Moon Wearer's devotees congregated, the streets were sprinkled with musk and decorated with designs made from the fruit of the oyster.[26] Many crocodile festoons,[27] all decorated with buds, tender leaves, gems, and pearls, were draped about. Dense clusters of standards bore the image of the bull.[28] Wind socks shaped like open hands[29] waved in the breeze. Ornate pavilions covered the sky, and there were many white umbrellas. All kinds of instruments played, and cries of praise were heard. The sound "cāgu! baḷā!"[30] reverberated in the sky. With devotion developing in his mind, Basava, the repository of devotion, met the devotees of Īśvara each day. And he shone with the riches of the eternal liṅga.

Basaveśvara Observes the Śaiva Creed

Basava's heart swelled with the physical manifestations of bliss and purity. He repeatedly prostrated himself at the feet of the devotees. Again and again he rolled in the dust from the lotus feet of the devotees. Again and again he plunged into the nectar of compassion that rained from Hara's devotees. He floated on an ocean of water that had washed the teachers' blessed feet. He made himself weary with the wealth of hospitality that he rendered in order to please the crowds of devotees. He struggled and struggled to satisfy his desire to worship the supreme essence of Śiva. He rejoiced as he enjoyed the pure, eternal, true prasāda of the śaraṇas. He praised them with well-chosen words. He enjoyed the beauty of the music. With a smile on his face, he played in the hall of the Hara gaṇas. He was a storehouse of devotion and became intoxicated and satiated with it. He gave of his body, mind, and riches to those who came asking to have their needs satisfied. When people wanted to experience the supreme, he plunged them into an ocean of it. When people came and asked to enjoy the pleasures of devotion, he drowned them in the riches of devotion. When some men asked for sexual pleasures, he served them with the gems among women. To those who came asking for clothes and ornaments, he gave them clothes and ornaments. When devotees asked to be treated like princes, he served them like princes. He satisfied those who came to enjoy the pleasures of eight-limbed devotion.[31] Knowing the vows of devotees, he gave them facilities to maintain their vows. To those who were intent on living a principled life, he gave what they needed for their worship.

Basava joyfully ruled the empire of devotion. "While yokes[32] of food and other necessities were sent to them three times a day, there were twelve thousand jaṅgamas who delighted in sexual pleasures and enjoyed themselves in the houses of courtesans. Īśvara himself could not count the number of other jaṅgamas," said the devotees amazed. And Basava gave ash-wearers[33] and all the rest of the devotees everything they desired.

The Spiritual Power of Basava's Nephew, Cĕnnabasava[34]

The very life breath of Lady Nāgāmba's son was devotion to the supreme lord. He had an excellent body that was born out of Basava's compassionate hand. His soul was involved with the yoga of devotion. He was called Cĕnnabasava. He richly deserved the guru's attention. He bore the liṅga all over his body. He had no desire for the things of the world. He had conquered his pride. He followed the ancient Śaiva tradition. He sought after good qualities. He talked well. He was an ocean of compassion. He had entered the liṅga with his mind, and his mind was at peace. He was kind. He knew the meaning of the Vedas. He was blissful. He was free from the two kinds of karma.[35] He followed the tradition of the liṅga. He had conquered his enemies. He served the soul. He loved the liṅga. He knew what is eternal. His associations were good. He was eternally alert. He was the embodiment of love in its supreme form. He enjoyed being involved in good devotion. He had rejected associations with evil. He was constantly united with his soul. He spoke only the truth. He was pure in appearance. He was always courageous. He had conquered sin. His was the form of Īśvara. He was occupied with things that transcend the senses. His fame was eternal, and he had the grace of the lord.

When they saw how he looked, and when they saw his incomparable spiritual power and how he flourished day by day, all the devotees were amazed and said, "Every day he worships Basava's sacred lotus feet. His body thrills because of his abundant devotion. His throat quivers. Tears of bliss flow from his eyes. He has directly experienced the pleasure of churning liṅga with life. He has overcome the desire to behave like the monkey, which clings to the object it acquires, and has progressed in his path like the crow, which discards the fruit after sucking its juice.[36] Through his guru he has acquired the secret blessing of devotion, and he is transported with the pleasure of it.

"His liṅga is his life breath. His body is blessed. His mind is pure devotion. His riches are the comfort he receives from the Hara gaṇas. Cĕnnabasava is truly a collection of all these good qualities.

"He is the very life breath of the liṅga. He is the essence in the offering that Śiva returns. He is the source of devotion to jaṅgamas. He is the abode of auspicious qualities. Thoughts cannot comprehend him, and words cannot describe him. He has the spirit of Śiva. Is it not in vain that we attempt to describe him with the little words that emerge from our little thoughts? Basava is acquainted with Cĕnnabasava. And, therefore, he alone can know and describe Cĕnnabasava's spiritual power. In like manner, Cĕnnabasava knows and praises the power of Basava."

Cĕnnabasava
Praises Basveśvara

Cĕnnabasava was full of perfect devotion. He praised his guru, Basava Rāja,[37] with these words: "You are eternal! You know everything! You are an emblem of good character! You are the lord of the universe. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! You have the essence of the faultless Vedānta readily accessible to you. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! You are bestowed with the highest spiritual state, and you are lord over the wealth of noble devotion. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! You take the form of the supreme light, and your body is pure. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! You transcend the world of creation, maintenance, and destruction. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! Your body is beyond the shining and the nonshining, the mobile and the immobile. You are without beginning or end. You are a pure and eternal light. You are a learned soul. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! You are above the six paths.[38] You destroy the whole gamut of sins. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! Your sidelong glances alone are all that are needed to save those who are desirous of salvation. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! You have the knowledge that destroys the darkness of ignorance. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! Your hand rests on the heads of your fortunate disciples. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! You have the leftover food that the disciples eat in order to absolve themselves of their sins. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! You are eternally at rest in the lotus hearts of the devotees. Blessed guru, to you I bow down! You dwell in the pure hearts of those who are blessed by the guru. Blessed guru, to you I bow down!"

The Arrival of Allama Prabhu

Allama Prabhu[39] was the lord of yogis. He had the likeness of the destroyer of death.[40] His fame was great. He had eliminated bodily passions. His actions were a sword that destroyed the two kinds of karma. He had renounced involvement in the world. He acted on the basis of distancing that which is unseen and that which is seen. He accepted nothing from others. He was equally unswayed by humiliation or honor. In his mind there was no distinction between dirt and gold, grief and happiness, enemies and friends. His mind was devoid of the seven elements,[41] pride, and the other ordinary physical qualities. He was beyond the end of creation. He was capable of destroying the magic that is spun by time as it operates through desires and nondesires. He was blissfully lost in the enjoyment of Śiva. His hair fell loose upon his shoulders. The god smiled sweetly upon him. He was a pure man. He was a master of music. He had internalized the sacrifice, and he was continuously involved with yoga. He knew the boundless import of the Vedānta. He was both with and without a body. He was both with and without a name. He spoke but he did not speak. He thought but he did not think. He was involved with a yoga that transcended both nondualistic and dualistic yoga. Throughout the three worlds he was known as the epitome of devotion. He acted without thought. He had forgotten himself in the bliss of contemplating the liṅga in his palm. He no longer made any distinction between river and lowland, between tree and soil, between path and forest. When he walked, all of these moved aside and made way for him.

The people praised him and called it a miracle. And while the ocean of devotion to Basava was flowing like a river, he came as if swept along like a boat on the flood. Lord Basava, acting like a merchant who knows gems and accepts only the good ones, kept his mind on Saṅgayyadeva and bowed devotedly to Prabhu.

As Prabhu sat on the majestic, jeweled, eternal, golden throne, his body shone and lighted up the space between heaven and earth. He gave the appearance of having life breath in his body, but he really had none. Though he moved, he was really not active. His eyes were heavy. His life breath was the liṅga. He was alive, but his body was not animate. He was nameless but yet beyond fame. His words transcended language. His essence transcended thoughts. He himself had no qualities, but he bestowed good qualities on others. He was the formless supreme but yet he had a form.

Seeing him, Basava shed tears of joy and his voice quavered. Then Basava bowed down to Prabhu and worshiped him as was appropriate. And while liṅga instruments played, he offered him flame offerings.

Basava Gives Allama Prabhu a Feast

Basava set a plate for Allama Prabhu and served him all five kinds of delicious foods, grains, and other comestibles. Then he formed them into large portions, each one big enough for a great mouthful. Just as Suriya Cauḍarasu[42] once did for Hara, he placed them in Prabhu's hand, and the latter took them from there.

Prabhu consumed all the food that had been prepared to feed 180,000 jaṅgamas. But even then Basava did not pause to ask himself how he was going to manage. "I will be your food now," he said and was preparing to offer himself.

Prabhu was very pleased.

"Hurrah!" shouted the assembly of devotees.

"Well done!" they cried with compassion.

"Good work, Basava! You are the greatest of devotees."

"Basava, you are amazing. You are Nandi incarnate."

Prabhu said, "O son, your birth resembles the essence of ambrosia. It is like a light in a ruby of fine quality. It is like having fruit on sugar cane. It is like having fragrance in gold. It is like having a flower on a sandalwood tree. It is like life in a picture. It is like breath in a golden image. My Basava! Basava the commander-in-chief! Basava the ancient one! Basava the inestimable! Basava, you belong to the devotees! Basava, you belong to the pramathas! Basava the lord of liberation! My dear Basava!

"Basava is Saṅga! Basava is prasāda! Basava is jaṅgama! Basava is truth! Basava is a scholar! Basava is the truly worthy one! Basava is the treasurer! Basava is good fortune! Basava is reality! Basava is greatness! Basava is goodness! Basava is eternal! Basava is the bull! Basava is the light of wisdom! Basava is Poison Throat![43] Basava is the power of discrimination! Basava is capable! Basava knows reality! Basava is a sage! Basava knows everything! Basava is fulfilled! Basava is famous! Basava is pure! Basava is wise! Basavayya! Basavanna! Young Basava! Basava! Basava Rāja! Basava Liṅga!

"The body of fast-flowing water is all feet. The body of a burning fire is all mouth. The body of the wind that blows is all head. The body of Basava, who is involved in worship, is all devotion.

"Why do you have doubts? Even cattle become devotees when they hear the name of Basava. Why do you have doubts? Even children become devotees when they hear the name of Basava. Why do you have doubts? Even Three Eyes becomes devoted when he hears the name of Basava. When they hear the devotees say the name of Basava, even birds are filled with devotion. When they are around devotees who say the name of Basava, even animals become devotees. Why do you have doubts? If you utter Basava's name, poison will turn into ambrosia. Why do you have doubts? If you say Basava's name, a sharp sword will become a flower. Why do you have doubts? If you speak Basava's name, even enemies will become friends. If you speak Basava's name, even wildfire will be cool like moonlight. Is there anyone else in the three worlds who is capable of enjoying the devotion that provides the comfort of union with the liṅga? And is there anyone else who associates himself with the life breath of jaṅgamas and eats both kinds of prasāda[44] at the same time?"

Basava bowed devotedly with hands folded as he received their many words of praise. He said to Allama, "You have compassion on the devotees! You are the supreme of the supreme! You are the great soul! You are the lord of salvation! Your form is divine! You know everything! You are the lord! You are the mobile liṅga! You are the greatest of the pramathas! You are the master! You are Saṅgayya! You are the affectionate one! You are an ocean of compassion! Do I have sufficient devotion to feed you adequately?"

Pārvati Serves a Feast to the Pramathas

And Basava said,

"Once upon a time the daughter of the mountain[45] went to worship Black Neck. All the pramathas were there, and they all looked just alike. When Ambika[46] stood before them, she could not tell who was the supreme lord and who were the pramathas.

"Being sensitive to her plight, all the pramathas except Pārvati's husband instantly dispensed with their previous forms. Each of them took on his own individual form. They had the faces of cows, goats, monkeys, and cocks. They had the faces of elephants, *śarabhas*,[47] camels, and tigers. They had the faces of buffaloes, dogs, antelopes, and cats. They had the faces of snakes, lions, boars, birds, and so on. Some of them had two faces. Some of them had four faces, three faces, or only one face. Some were faceless, and some had five faces or even a thousand faces. There were those who had big lips, big eyes, big noses, big bellies, or enormous ears. Some had elephant ears, goat ears, rat ears, ears like victory gongs, or valiant ears! Some of them had faces in place of hands. Some of them had hands in place of bodies. Some of them had hands in place of feet. Some had hands where their mouths should have been. Some had many hands, or many feet, or many tongues, or many cheeks. Some were multicolored. Some had multiple ears. Some had several different bodies.

"When Ambika saw all the crores[48] of pramatha gaṇas, she was astounded. She bowed to her husband, who had kept his own form, and praised him. Then she spoke these words: 'Listen, O lord of the pramathas. All these pramathas have assumed shapes that correspond to their mental states. I feel devotion to them growing within me, and I am going to serve them a feast at once!'

"She gave ashes to all of them and departed.[49] Then she made the sky into an open space and constructed pavilions out of the elements. She used the cosmic egg of Brahma as a cooking vessel and prepared all kinds of well-cooked foods. She plucked fruit and tender leaf buds from the all-giving tree and seasoned them with ambrosia. There are millions of oceans of milk, sugar cane juice, curds, and clarified butter. From these she took milk, sugar cane juice, curds and clarified butter, and made the best of drinks. She put cloths over the drinks and filtered them into all the lakes, and mixed them well. Then the divine-eyed lady whose eyes were the birthplace of a thousand all-giving cows served the food in a hall decorated with all-giving diamonds.

"While she was busy preparing the feast, the pramathas who were gathered dispatched a young pramatha with instructions to go to Pārvati's house to find out whether the meal was ready or not.

" 'I'll go and find out,' he said, and went to see her.

"As he was about to ask her whether it was ready or not, she told him to run and fetch the pramathas.

"But he said, 'Give me just a bite to eat, and then I will go and bring them. I can't go when I am so hungry.'

"She quickly offered the food to the liṅga and gave him a little. But he proceeded to devour huge morsels as large as the cardinal mountains of the universe.

"When Pārvati saw that all the food was gone, she was amazed and said, 'I prepared a feast for all the pramathas, but this one little pramatha has eaten every bit of it. This is amazing! What am I going to do now?'

"Then the daughter of the mountain went to Īśvara and bowed down before him. When she praised the pramathas, he said, 'Gauri, even a minor gaṇa is this powerful. Can you imagine the might and power of the great gaṇas? Even the Vedas shiver at their own inadequacy to praise the gaṇas and wonder at the hosts of them.

" 'The pramathas are imperishable. They are invincible. They are endowed with efficacy and power. They are non-twice-born.[50] They are immortal. They are incomparable. They are deathless. They are indestructible. They are divine. They are prosperous. They are praised throughout the three worlds. They are very fortunate. They have good characters. They have good minds. They are valiant. They are birthless. They are incomparable. They are blissful. They know the Vedānta. They are universally worshiped. They are the first cause. They have the ability to atomize themselves and more.[51] They exist in many different states. They are endowed with the qualities of the liṅga. They are born of the ancient liṅga. They look like the liṅga. Their body is *mahāliṅga*. They are associated with the prāṇa liṅgas. They seek after the liṅga. They experience the liṅga. They have the dignity of the liṅga. They have the liṅga as their origin. They are votaries of the liṅga. They are endowed with liṅga consciousness. They enjoy the liṅga. They are collections of liṅgas. They attend to the liṅga. They take comfort in the liṅga. They are favorable to the liṅga. They are disciplined by the liṅga. They have the liṅga for their life breath. They are deeply involved with the liṅga. They are recipients of all things that are auspicious. They are masters of everything. They are infinite. They are the cause of everything.

" 'But why should I go on talking? Our own body is the body of the pramathas. There is no other body but that. If a single pramatha wills it, all the multitudes of universes can be destroyed, created, or maintained. But that is not all. The pramathas can destroy Hari and Viriñci[52] and the rest of the gods. So why make a big thing out of this? With the wink of an eye a pramatha can destroy the entire world. The power of our pramathas is beyond description or imagination.' The Mother Goddess was amazed by what she heard. Even she was not capable of feeding a little gaṇa," said Basava.

Then Basava praised Prabhu, saying, "O God! You are praised by the gods! The divine liṅga is your body! You are beyond conception! You have good thoughts for you companion! Śaṅkara! You drive away sins! O God! Brahma is your servant! You are auspicious! You have the form of consciousness! You are the light! O God! You are other than the other! You deal tenderly with the devotees! You are totally auspicious! You destroy the cycle of birth and death! You know everything! You are God! You are an incarnation of Saṅgameśa! If Pārvati herself were incapable of satisfying even a little pramatha, how can I possibly claim to be able to feed you? And how can I begin to serve you? But yet you are compassionate."

Allama Prabhu Gives a Boon to Basava

Allama returned Basava's praises and buoyed him up on the ambrosial ocean of his compassion. He said, "I have the all-giving cow, the all-giving diamond, and the all-giving tree serving me.[53] It is not a big matter for me to grant a boon." And he compassionately thought about giving him prasāda.

Prabhu gave Basava the imperishable riches of the liṅga. It produced whatever foodstuffs he thought of. Whatever he needed came to him. Any promise that he made was kept. His path remained stable. He had only to touch trash to turn it into shining gold. Even empty space took the form of God at his touch. He had the capacity to conquer Śiva in a fight. He could even withstand the attack of jaṅgamas. He could combine essence and meaning. He was able to cast off infatuation, illusion, and all the rest. He was able to suppress the hatred that arises from the physical senses. He acquired the ability to know himself. He became associated with good action. His life breath was absorbed in the liṅga. His master was absorbed in his life breath. He experienced the boundless bliss that comes from following the path of devotion to Śiva. He followed the inner yogic path that is said to be unaffected by either day or night. He enjoyed the inner and outer bliss that comes from the knowledge of the pramathas.

Basava now knew the essence of Śiva. It was like putting a bag of salt in water. It was like putting camphor in fire. It was like hailstones falling in the ocean. He behaved as if he were no longer an individual.

Whosoever devotedly reads or listens to the story of Prabhu will enjoy sweetness, reverence, bliss, and oneness with the liṅga.

The Story of the Eggplants That Became Liṅgas

One day, while the commander-in-chief was devotedly serving the jaṅgamas, some thieves decided to rob his house. They knew that anyone without a liṅga would never be allowed into the house, so they tied eggplants[54] around their necks under their clothing. They then entered just as if they were wearing the liṅga. But when they saw Basava, the commander-in-chief, they were struck with fear.

As they bowed before him, he looked at them with smiling eyes and said, "People who do not wear the liṅga cannot enter our house. But since you are devotees, go worship Īśvara without any fear."

They looked at each other. Their minds were agitated, and their hearts were chilled with fear. They said to themselves, "We are trapped here. If only the liṅga were here, we would escape death. There is no way that we can get away."

But they had already taken their seats. And when they reached forth their hands as if they had liṅgas, with the blessing of Basava, the eggplants became prāṇa liṅgas.

The Story of Balleśu Mallayya

The same thing happened to a man who went on a business trip to an area that was without a liṅga temple.

His fellow merchants wondered if he would die if he broke his vow to be constantly in touch with the liṅga. So this is what those small-minded men did. They constructed a temple out of grass. Inside they put a measuring vessel and offered wild hemp flowers to it.

"This is a temple of Black Throat," they said. "We have just now discovered it." And the merchants called the man and showed it to him.

With fervent devotion, he said, "Śiva! I bow down to you! I bow down to you!" After that he fell prostrate and walked around the temple three times. Then he went home and ate his dinner.

"Look at that! He calls a measuring vessel a liṅga, bows down to it, and starts right in eating. When he is hungry, anything that is handy becomes a god for him. But remember that we will need our measuring vessel again for measuring the first thing in the morning," they said, ridiculing Lord Śiva.

"I shouldn't even listen to them," he said. And he covered his ears with his hands. "Hey! You dogs! Are you trying to tell me that this is not an actual liṅga but only a measuring vessel? You talk a lot, but you don't have any idea what you are talking about. If you don't believe me, just come with me. I'll show you the god who carries the trident."

When they got there, they saw a compound, a porch, a golden cupola, a temple, and the lord of the bulls[55] facing the measuring vessel, which had become a liṅga. The merchant is now known throughout the world as Balleśu Mallayya.[56]

The Story of Kāṭakoṭa

There was a shepherd named Kāṭakoṭa who worshiped goat droppings as Śiva. When he poured milk on the droppings, his father ridiculed him and kicked them with his foot.[57] Being a pure devotee, Kāṭakoṭa naturally became enraged. Without a moment's hesitation, he picked up an ax and lopped off his father's head, which fell and rolled on the earth. To his way of thinking, it was like cutting off the head of the tiger that was evil birth.

When he struck that blow here on earth, the windows and doors of the Kailāsa[58] palace also rattled and shook.

"Amazing! Is this ax the linchpin of Kailāsa?" the people said in consternation.

At that the droppings became a liṅga. Didn't sorghum also turn into a liṅga[59] in the thoughts of Bāvūri Brahmayya?[60] Is it not true, then, that the birthplace of the divine liṅga is in the thoughts of the devotee?

When you consider the wealth of Basava's devotion, is this anything to wonder at? Even scoffers gain the transcendental realm when they put on the marks of Śiva. Even through carelessness or deception, a man can become a devotee of Moon Wearer.[61] To the amazement of the devotees, Basavayya regarded the thieves as pure people, and by doing so he made them devotees.

The Story of Sorghum That Turned into Pearls

One day a jaṅgama came to Basava before taking his oil bath. "This is my daily vow. Every day I use a measure of pearl powder to draw the sacred designs.[62] O Basava, give me ten large measures of pearls without a moment's delay," he said.

When he heard this, Basava took the liṅgapasāyita weapon in his hands and looked about. Before him was a big heap of sorghum.[63] It became a big heap of fine pearls. With a smile, he said, "Why settle for just ten large measures? Take as many as you want."

"Let it be so," he said. And the jaṅgama carried all the pearls away in bags.

The Story of Mŏṙaṭada Vaṅkayya

Once there was a man named Mŏṙaṭada Vaṅkayya. A devotee of Black Throat came to him in the middle of the night, and Vaṅkayya bowed at his feet, treated him hospitably, and made him happy.

The devotee said, "I have made a vow to my liṅga. It must have the milk of one cow and the leaves of a *mārēḍu*[64] tree. That is the only way that the vow can be kept. I have come here expecting to have my vow fulfilled. There must be no further delay! If I fail to get them at once, the purpose will not be served. There are no other devotees of Śiva in this village. And I never ask favors of others. Furthermore, I can't leave this village and go to another. What can I do?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Vaṅkayya went out and got a dry cow and tied it to a pole. Then he thought of Kāma Killer's devotee. "I will get leaves from this pole and milk from this dry cow," he said. When he brought a pot, washed it, and began to milk, the dry cow gave a full pot of milk. Also, the pole sprouted leaves, and Mŏṟaṭada Vaṅkayya plucked them. Then he brought the leaves and the milk and gave them to the devotee. Thus was the vow fulfilled.

"It is indeed a remarkable story. But what we had previously only heard of in the ancient stories we have now seen right here in this city. At Basava's touch, while everyone was looking on, a pile of sorghum has become a heap of pearls," said the devotees.

The Story of How Saṅgameśvara Asked Basava for a Third Eye

When he saw that Basava was giving the jaṅgamas everything that they wanted, Saṅgameśvara said, "I, too, will ask to have my desires fulfilled." And he came in the guise of a jaṅgama and asked Basava to give him a third eye.

Holding the liṅgapasāyita in his hand, Basava said, "I know your tricks." Then he held up a mirror and said, "It is clearly visible on your forehead. You already have it. Look for yourself and see."

When he looked in the mirror, the God of gods was ashamed and immediately became invisible.

Clicking his tongue, Basava said, "Hey, you coward! Don't run away! Listen, Saṅga! I don't want anything from you. Don't you realize that I am the top man in the houses of the māheśvaras? I'm not going to ask for inexhaustible grain bins,[65] as Dāsayya did. I won't ask you for my son, as Siriyāla did.[66] I won't ask you for a shower of gold, as Karikāla did.[67] I won't ask you to be my pimp,[68] as Nambi did. I have no desire to get younger so that I can satisfy my lusts, as Kummara Guṇḍayya[69] did. I don't even want the comforts of heaven and beyond.

"Bharga, I can always enjoy the prasāda that is in the houses of those who are devoted to your pramathas. You are the soul of the devotees. Kāṭakoṭayya[70] is your waterman. Hara! Kannappadevayya is your priest. Puṣpadanta makes flower garlands in your house. Iṇḍĕ Rekavva makes wreaths of flowers. Naminandi fixes the butter lamps. Piḷḷa Nāyanāru applies sacred ash to your forehead and blesses you. Kāma

Killer, Aṇumūrti devotedly offers you sandal paste. Mācayya gives you incense. Ohiḷayya rings the bell. Somayya, who is compassionate to those who take refuge in him, gives flame offerings. Mārayya brings firewood. Karikālu gives the daily rations. Black Throat! Sirutoṇḍa Nambi is the cook. Saṅgaḷavva is the kitchen maid. Karikāla Coḍa sets the plate. The great Hŏnnayya carries the water yoke. The pure-bodied Cĕnnayya sprinkles ritual water over the food. Vīracoḍavva feeds you when you are hungry. Recaya is in charge of the betel-leaf box. Bibba Bācayya takes the first bite.[71] Nāṭya Namittaṇḍi is the physician. Kallidevayya is the puppeteer. Malahara! Sāmavedulu is the family priest. Māyibhattu is the purāṇa singer. Kaḷiyamba is your jester. Vāgīśa Nāyanāru is the reader. Śrīpati Paṇḍitulu is the poet. O Śiva! Paṇḍitayya is the scholar. The principle vīṇa player is Mādirājayya. Śaṅkarayya is the music master. Destroyer of Karma! Keśirāju is the accountant. Jagadeva is the commander-in-chief.[72] Moon Wearer! Gaṇanātha is the chief minister. Prabhu is your lord. Iravattu is the chief of the elephant corps. The chief of the cavalry is Ceramayogi. Sinless One! Rāmayya is your private attendant. Ballaha is your pimp. Nambi is your companion. Śaṅkara! Your bodyguard is Śaṅkaradāsi. Eṇādhinātha bears the standard. Mancayya is your servant. The tax collector is Suṅkeśu Baṅkayya. Suriya Cauḍayya carries the dagger. Kulacciriyāru is your storyteller. Hara! Bĕjja Mahādevi is your nurse. Rudrapaśupati protects you from the evil eye. O God! Kakkayya is your timekeeper. Śivarātri Saṅgayya is your lancer. Bogatandĕ is your mistress. O God! Devara Dāsayya is your bondservant. Kinnara Brahmayya is your merchant. Maḍivālu Mācidevayya is the washerman. The lamp carrier is Kaḍamala Nambi. Goḍala Mallayya whitewashes the walls. Kummara Guṇḍayya is the potter. Jŏmmayya is the hunter. The great Illahāḷa Bŏmmayya is the blacksmith. The herdsman is Caṇḍa. O Illusion Maker, Balleśu Mallayya is your palanquin bearer. Bācayya is your storekeeper. The milkman is Vaṅkayya. Gŏḍagūci boils the milk for you.

"All the people who serve you are my people. You give me pleasure. What else do I want? And what do I lack? Ask me for whatever you will, and I will give it to you. Do not lose your honor; do not be upset. I take an oath on the pramathas, and I take an oath on you. Before you drank the poison; before you destroyed the cities;[73] before you were married to Gauri;[74] before the creation of this universe;[75] before your eight forms existed;[76] before Hari and Brahma were born;[77] before that and before that and before that, and even earlier, you were my lord, and I was your servant. Black Neck, why should you be agitated now? Is it possible for you to leave me and go away?"

In this way Basava contended with the three-eyed god and won. With his great devotion he conquered him.

The Story of How Basava Caught the Herdswoman's Buttermilk Pot

And one day when Basava, the sinless, the respectable, the commander-in-chief, the virtuous, the well-born, was sitting in Bijjala's court, he suddenly said, "Don't worry!" And he lifted up his hands as if to catch an earthen pot.

The king chuckled and said, "They say that if a man puts just a particle of ash on his forehead, it will produce a mountain of craziness! And it seems to be true. What is going on, Basavayya? Are you dizzy with Śiva? Has the nectar of devotion gone to your head and made you crazy? What do you mean by saying, 'Don't worry! Don't worry!' and raising up your hands like that in the middle of the court?"

"I really shouldn't sing my own praises," said Basava, "but if I don't, the court might take it wrong."

So he said, "A short distance[78] east of the Tripurāri Temple, in a place called Kapileśvaram, there lives an ascetic. Every day he bathes the liṅga with six measures of milk. The milk turns into rivulets and spreads all over the area, and under the elephant's feet, the whole place turns into a quagmire. A woman named Kāḷavva was walking along that path selling buttermilk. When she tried to get a footing, her feet slipped. As the buttermilk pot was about to fall, the milkmaid called, 'O Basava!' So I simply stretched out my hands and kept the pot from falling."

Then Basava proceeded to describe what the milkmaid looked like, what her house was like, and the particulars of the spot where she was. At once the king sent for the girl and asked her. She confirmed everything Basava had said. She even showed the mire on the hand with which she had reached out to catch herself, and the dirt she had gotten on her feet when she slipped.

"Don't you know this greatness? Is this a big thing for him to have done?" she asked.

The Story of Tirucitṭ̣ambala[79]

"Among the sixty-three pure devotees who performed glorious deeds, there was a devotee of unsullied fame called Tirucitṭ̣ambala. One day in the rainy season, he went out to get flowers in order to worship Hara. On his way back his foot slipped on the bank of a pond, and he fell. Fearing that the flowers would be ruined, and wanting to prevent such a thing from happening, he cried, 'O lord of Citṭ̣ambala!'

And the great one caught the devotee and prevented him from falling down.

"Now Basava has done the same for me. But that is not all, O King. Listen to this.

Siddha Rāmayya Goes to Kailāsa

"Siddha Rāmayya[80] went to Sonnalikapuram. There the congregation of devotees gathered around him and said, 'You have mastered the powers and designed this new city to look like a second Śrīśailam. You have brought Lord Mallikārjuna from the mountain and installed him here. You have even brought 190,000 Śaiva liṅgas and consecrated them. Everything that you do is as it should be. You never eat or drink anything that is given by the people of this world. You are endowed with devotion, but you also have a natural crown and a third eye. With your yogic powers, you move about without casting a shadow. Furthermore, you walk like a god without touching the ground. In your deep, yogic meditation you go to the world of the pramathas. There you happily take part in the esoteric discussions about reality. All this is well known. But did you ever see the famous Basava in that great assembly of the devotees? We have heard that he has the ability to be present in all the worlds at the same time, and that he is both here and there.'

"When he heard their question, Siddha Rāmayya looked at the assembly of Śiva's devotees and said, 'I will go to the world of pramathas and see,' and that very moment he went to the top of Kailāsa. There he saw[81] Aja, Kālabuddha, Kṣayāntarajyoti, Nijabalapriya, Yāmya, Nīla, Rudreśa, Īśāna, Śarva, Sarveśa, Bhargaprakāśa, Surādhīśa, Gaurīśa, Dhanya, Vāmadeva, Bhavodbhava, Pracaṇḍa, Dhara, Vāmadevogra, Samvāha, Pinākí, Dhātṛ, Vidhātṛ, Hutāśana, Śiva, Mahāteja, Sūkṣma, Laya, Krūradaṇṣṭra, Kṣemeśa, Vikaraṇārciṣmanta, Damana, Bhīmābhidhāna, Ugrapiṅgākṣa, Kartṛ, Viṣadhara, Ananta, Nivṛttinidhīśa, Vṛṣabhagaṇādhyakṣa, Vibhu, Vāyuvega, Hara, Ratnakara, Babhruhanāgni, Duḥkhakara, Sukhakara, Sudumbara, Kālarudra, Harihara, Brahma, Saumya, Svāmi, Mṛtyuhara, Bhayānaka, Halāhala, Parandhāma, Vajradeha, Avyaya, Vaṭa, Rudra, Dīrghavajradanta, Viyoktṛ, Vaṭa, Virūpākṣa, Sahaneśa, Śambhu, Pancaśikha, Niyoktṛ, Guha, Rudra, Bādhaka, Gopati, Īśāna, Piṅgaḷa, Asādhya, Mātaṅga, Rohita, Suraṅga, Kapāladhara, Sthūlarudra, Śāśvateśa, Ūrdhvakeśa, Tridaśeśa, Viśveśa, Caṇḍeśa, Vitteśa, Vṛṣadhara, Akṣayarudra, Kālāgnirudra, Triyakṣa, Phaṇīndra, Vicakṣa, and the rest of the gaṇas, who have marks of Rudra on their bodies. They were gathered to worship. Also there were

Śrīnandi, Nandināthānanda, Vṛṣabha, Sānanda, Gomukha, Hayamukha, Abhaṅga, Daṇḍapāṇi, Īśāna, Caṇḍīśa, Rudra, Ruṇḍābharaṇa, Raudra, Puṇḍarīkeśa, Parvatābharaṇa, Darpa, Subhadra, Śarva, Sarvajna, Sarvātma, Sarvasaṁharaṇa, Dāruka, Reṇuka, Dhavaḷākṣa, Vīra, Vīraka, Vīrabhadra, Ārūḍhabhadra, Trijaṭi, Dhūrjaṭi, Lokavijayāṭṭahāsa, Nijabala, Viṣabala, Nīla, Niśśaṅka, Nīlalohita, Nitya, Niṣkaḷa, Śānta, Kāla, Mahākāla, Kālagaḷa, Ugrarūpa, Nirūpa, Virūpākṣa, Viśvarūpa, Puṣkaḷa, Śāntarūpa, Vṛṣāṅka, Ugrākṣa, Bharga, Asitagrīva, Piṅgaḷa, Ugrakāya, Atikāya, Uttuṅga, Vimukha, Karimukha, Naramukha, Kapimukha, Dvimukha, Śarabhamukha, Amukha, Uṣṭramukha, Śārdūlamukha, Caturmukha, Pañcamukha, Sumukha, Aṣṭamukha, Navamukha, Daśamukha, Ṣaṇmukha, Ekamukha, Sahasramukha, Durmukha, Vikaṭākṣa, Makhahara, Viṣahara, Malahara, Mṛtyuhara, Yamahara, Gajāsurahara, Sakalasurahara, Asurahara, Purahara, Bhṛṅgi, Gajakarṇa, Śārdūlakarṇa, Aśvakarṇa, Vijayaghaṇṭākarṇa, and Vīragokarṇa. These were the pramatha gaṇas who, among others, were enjoying the wealth of truth and worshiping. There also were the good sages Sanaka and Sanandana, who brought their lotus hearts. With them were Upamanyu, Vāmadeva, Pavitrapāṇi, Kapila, Kaṇva, Agastya, Kauśika, Subala, Śveta, Dadhīci, Vasiṣṭha, Kaṇva, Atri, Gautama, Kaśyapa, Sūta, Anilātma, Māṇḍavya, Harita, Mārkaṇḍeya, Pulaha, Śāṇḍilya, Vatsa, Kutsa, Pulasti, Śakti, Bādarāyaṇa, Bhṛgu, Bakadālbhya, Ruru, Śilāda, Maudgalya, Parṇāda, Śakalya, Garga, Śaunaka, Catuṣkarṇa, Mṛkaṇḍu, Bhārgava, Angirasa, Vibhāṇḍaka, Śunaka, Maitreya, Ballaki, Maṅkaṇa, Cyavana, Mitrāvaruṇa, Nārada, Atri, Sauvarṇa, Paila, Sumanta, Subrahmaṇya, Mandapāla, Sumitra, Raibhyaka, Satya, Sumaha, Parvata, Jaimini, Paulastya, Gārgya, Durvāsa, and all the rest of the good sages who accompanied their worship with vedic chants of blessing. The gods, humans, demons, *khecaras*,[82] *siddhas*, *sādhyas*, *garuḍas*, *gandharvas*, and *uragas*; the twelve suns, the eleven rudras,[83] the nine brahmas, and the eight vasus; the lords of the cardinal directions:[84] Surapa, Agni, Yama, Daitya, Varuṇa, Gandhavāha, Naravāha, and Haradiśānātha; and Brahma and Viṣṇu came asking for protection. Tumburu and Nārada,[85] and others like them, sang sweet ambrosial music.

"When Siddha Rāmayya saw Śiva sitting beside Ambika in the colossal court, he immediately fell prostrate and devotedly said, 'You are the mainstay of being and the lord of the universe. Listen to my request. The devotees in the world of men have asked me to find out whether Basava is here in the world of the pramathas. They want to know whether he serves the lord of the pramathas. Basava praises you. Your only body is the assembly of the devotees. Please tell me if he is here or not.'

Śiva Reveals Basava in His Heart

" 'Why talk about this or that world when you ask about Basava? He is present in all the worlds. He is to be found among the pramathas. He is one of the true devotees. He is at the center of my lotus heart. And he dwells eternally in the guru liṅga and in the mobile liṅgas. The primal Basava lives in all these places. Look here!' said Śiva, and opened his heart.

"When he did so, Siddha Rāmayya saw Basava sitting on a lotus in the center of Parameśa's[86] lotus heart. In his palm was a liṅga. With one hand he offered refuge to all the jaṅgamas. He looked steadily at Śiva, and there were tears of happiness in his eyes. He had a smile on his face, and he appeared to be lost in the contemplation of Śiva.

"All of the pramathas were very pleased. All of the gods bowed down. Uma was completely amazed. When he saw Basava, Siddha Rāmayya's heart was filled with bliss.

Śiva Tells Pārvati about Basava's Power

" 'Have you not witnessed Basava's power? Is anyone else as stable as he is? Actually I myself have taken both these forms: Basava and the lord of the cattle. It was I who said, 'I will be your son,' and allowed myself to be born to Śilāda. I was born on the earth for the benefit of the devotees, and for that purpose I was called Basava. I am Īśa, and I am also the good devotee called Basava. Don't you already know about Basava's good qualities? I am the lord of the people, O lady with flashing eyes. And he is the one who purifies the people. I destroy the worlds for a purpose, and he protects the worlds for a purpose. Pārvati, I am affectionate to the devotees, and he is the treasurer for the gems of devotees. My body is the assembly of devotees, and Basava is the life in the devotees. I am the king of liberation, and he is the king of devotion. I am enthroned on the liṅga, and Basava is enthroned on devotion. I am the stable liṅga, and he is the mobile liṅga. My ancient name is Śambhu, and he is known as the second Śambhu. One has to serve me with steadfast devotion, or he is not liberated. But a person only has to think of Basava to be liberated. Sometimes the devotees give me their life, their bodies, and their wealth, but Basava gives himself completely to the devotees. My gaṇas and I become permanent residents in the mouths of anyone who utters the three syllables *Ba-sa-va*. If anyone is devoted, it is only through the power of Basava. If anyone receives my blessings, it is only through the grace of Basava. Anyone who thinks of us does so only because he has some quality of Basava in him. Anyone who serves jaṅgamas does so through Basava's efforts. Is there anyone else but Basava who is qualified in devotion? But why do I only talk of his being in me? He dwells in the hearts of all the devotees.'

"When Śambhu had finished praising Basava, he addressed him in these words: 'Basava, are there devotees on the earth at this time? Do you enjoy living on earth?'

"Basava answered from the lotus heart of the God: 'Right now there is not even a single devotee of Moon Wearer on the earth. I am the only devotee, and all the rest have your form.[87] I have just one more request, O Moon Wearer; please listen to it. I would be happy to be born any number of times if I could only enjoy the ambrosial ocean of the happiness of associating with the prasāda of jaṅgama liṅgas. And I would prefer them to a place in heaven. I would even be happy to be born as a dog, a pig, an insect, or a worm if I could enjoy jaṅgama prasāda every day. So give me birth among the billions of beings; I do not want anything more.'

"Śiva then looked compassionately at Siddha Rāmayya, who bowed to him, went to the earth, and there gave a detailed account of the efficacy of Basavayya."

When she finished telling her story, Bijjala said, "What we have just seen is visible evidence of what you have told us." And he gave invaluable clothing and ornaments to the herdswoman, Kāḷavva.

Everyone said, "When a devotee has Śiva, the essence of the unbroken cosmic egg, in the palm of his hand, it is only natural for that devotee of the omnipresent Śambhu to be omnipresent himself. When a person is devoted to Śiva, who permeates everything, it is only natural for him to permeate everything. Seeing things at a distance, hearing sounds at a distance, knowing things at a distance, and the rest of the powers, beginning with atomization, are nothing particularly unusual for a devotee of the god who is without birth." And all the people bowed down with their hands folded on their heads.

The king shouted, "Hurrah!" and joyfully gave all kinds of gifts of clothes to Basava, the commander-in-chief.

You are graced by devotion to your guru! You are the mainstay of all good qualities! You are adorned with compassion! Your form is beautiful! Your dignity is well known! You keep bad karma at a distance! Your noble qualities are the subject of songs! You have cast off the cycle of death and rebirth! You think clearly! You are a scholar of the Śaiva tradition! You know the essence of things! Your character is pure! You have conquered ignorance! Your life is noble! You are deserving of knowledge! You have the comfort of ultimate truth! You have reached the heights of ritual perfection! Your heart is beautiful! Your limbs are secretly blessed! You are Saṅga of Gŏbbūru!

This is the work of the good poet and fortunate soul Pālkuriki Somanātha, who enjoys the fragrance of the lotus feet of the innumerable māheśvaras and who is immersed in the ambrosial ocean of pleasure that is derived from the blessings of the jaṅgama liṅga. It has benefited greatly from the poetic spirit graciously bestowed by Karasthali Viśvanātha.

This is the second chapter of the story that is known as the *Basava Purāṇa.*

CHAPTER III

You are the supreme devotee of Lord Rudra! You follow the heroic māheśvara tradition! Your name is Saṅga!

A paramour[1] jaṅgama approached Basava, the commander-in-chief, when he and the ministers, instructed by the king, were distributing wages to the king's retinue. "I have come because I want to have all of that money for myself," he said. "And I am not going to leave until you hand it over to me. I won't settle for anything less."

In response to this aggressive demand, Basava gave the jaṅgama all of the money in the coffers.

But no sooner had he done so than the ministers and the king's retinue went as a group to the king and said, "What we have to say may be interpreted as slander. But if we keep silent, we may be accused of complicity. Therefore, we are obliged to speak. We are afraid to continue working with Basava. He has given all of your money to a paramour."

When they uttered this slander, the king became very angry. He summoned Basava, the commander-in-chief, and said, "Give back our money and go! Is that too much to ask? I've had enough of your ministerial services. I was lenient because I thought that I should not punish you. But now you have thrown away the entire treasury. They told me that you had vowed not to take anything that belongs to someone else. So how could you take someone else's money? But why go on talking about it? Frankly, we are afraid to say anything more to you. Just give back our money and live your own life."

With a slight smile on his face, Basava gave this reply to the king. "When he has the divine tree of devotion to Parameśa, and when he has the golden mountain of devotion to Hara, and when he has the all-giving diamond of devotion to Kāma Killer, and when he has the divine cow of devotion to Moon Wearer, does a devotee crave money that belongs to others? Does the king of the beasts eat grass? Does a swan that sports in the milk ocean have any desire to drink water out of ordinary puddles? Does a parrot that eats mangoes want to look at the fruit of the silk cotton tree?[2] Does a *cakora*[3] bird that drinks the light of the full moon ever want to swallow the darkness of the night? Does a bee that relishes the smell of lotuses in full bloom ever want a whiff of the blossoms of a *babbili*[4] plant? Think about it for a minute. Does the calf of a cardinal elephant[5] suck the teat of a wild pig? O King, I am a slave of the devotees who have all their money in the liṅga. Do I care for your money? I would never lift a finger to take your money. I have given the master's money to the master. If your money is found to be short by even the slightest amount, I am not a devotee. If you don't believe what I say, go count your money," he said.

Firmly resolved to clear himself, Basava placed the coffer in front of the king. When the lock was opened, and they all looked inside, they saw that it was full to the brim. And they were astonished to find that it counted out to be even more than there had been before.

The Story of the Foxes That Became Horses[6]

"The Pāṇḍya[7] of Madhura[8] gave his minister a large amount of money and asked him to buy horses with it. Because of his excessive devotion, the minister spent all of the money on worshiping jaṅgamas. When the money was gone, there was nothing left with which to buy horses. Then, without the slightest hesitation, the minister rounded up all the foxes in the fields, brought them, and showed them to the Pāṇḍya king. On account of Cŏkka Nāyanāru's[9] great compassion, all the foxes turned into fine steeds. When you consider the might of Mountain Slayer's[10] devotees, is it any wonder that such a thing could happen?" said all of the pure-hearted devotees, delighted. Bijjala was completely amazed. "This Basava is none other than Īśvara himself! How can he be anyone else?" he said. Then the king gave fine clothing and precious ornaments to Basava. Very lovingly and devotedly, while everyone listened, he said, "If anyone slanders my treasurer again, I'll have that person's tongue cut out; I'll have lime smeared on the wound; I'll have hot sand poured into his mouth." With that he took leave of the lionlike Basava. And he went to his palace while the people sang his praises.

The Story of How Basava Took off His Wife's Sari and Gave It to a Jaṅgama

One day a jaṅgama who was living in the house of a courtesan called her maidservant and said, "Go to the treasurer's palace, beg for what we need, and hurry right back."

"Just as you say," she said.

When she got to the palace, the maidservant saw Basava's wife. At the sight of what she was wearing, the woman was so astonished that she quit begging and went right back home and said to the courtesan, "Elder sister,[11] what can I say? I have just gone and seen a most amazing thing, such divine cloth as has never been produced in all the worlds. As soon as I saw the cloth in the garment that Basava's queen wore, I came right back to tell you about it. If our brother-in-law[12] would only ask, Basava wouldn't hesitate to give him that sari. The devotees of Mahādeva brought priceless garments and gave them to the jaṅgamas when they were serving the gaṇas: and jaṅgamas gave them to us with love. *Veñjāvaḷi,*[13] *jayarañji*, collection of dew, gem silk, best on earth, *śrī* color, great China, China, Kāma's best, emerald silk, king's crown, king's best, wind cloud, elephant trappings, *gaṇḍa vaḍamu*, ochre, *saripaṭṭu*, swan lake, row of *vīṇas*, *pallaḍa daṭṭi*, *vāraṇāsi*, rip-free ruby red, Gauri's knot, milk-water silk, jeweled silk, conch silk, emerald silk, gold silk, fine silk, white silk, *netra* silk, *tavarājamu*, *māndoḷiravi*, moonlight, sunset red, sapphire, Mahendra's ornament, fine dancing border, ocean, cloud-colored, rudrākṣa-colored, Kāmbhoji, tiger claw silk, lord of the earth, Rudra's mark, saripaṭṭu, wealth of sandalwood, lake cloud, row of elephants, row of horses, fine muslin, white-fringed, celestial cotton, morning song, god's cotton, soft cloth, and Gujarat silk. We are familiar with all of these and more. In the past our men have given us such things from time to time. And we do have a great quantity of fine clothing. But we have absolutely nothing to equal that garment. I am telling you the truth," said the maidservant.

Not doubting what the girl had told her, the courtesan went to her paramour and said, "If you really love me, you will go at once and get the cloth that Basava's wife, Gaṅgāmba, wears. And you will give it to me."

"Indeed I will," said her paramour.

He went directly to Basava and said, "You must give me the silk sari that your wife wears at once!"

Basava summoned his wife to the court. When the lady got there, he said, "A great man who is free from both birth and death has asked me for your sari. Give it to him at once; if you give, we will be free from rebirth."

Immediately, without any modesty or shame, he caught hold of his wife's sari and began to peel it off. But as he pulled one off, there was always another one there, so that the woman did not become naked. When the people saw this, they were completely amazed.[14]

The jaṅgama looked at the people and said, "Wasn't there a devotee named Iḍiguḍi Nāyanāru[15] who unwrapped his wife's saris in public and gave them to the devotees of Śambhu, who naturally control the thread of the world? Do you remember Deḍara Dāsayya?[16] He wove twelve cubits of golden cloth for twelve years and then gave it to the ascetic who had made that strange request. That's not all! How about the devotee Ballaha?[17] He actually gave his pure-hearted wife to a sage! Didn't Mŏnnayadhara give a precious gem to the devotee who asked for it? And how about the gaṇa named Iḍuguḍi Permāṇi? In famine time he spread the word around by drumming, and gave everything that he had in his house to the devotees of Moon Wearer. Didn't the devotee called Mānakañjāra[18] cut off his daughter's hair at her wedding and give it to a noble penitent when he came and asked for it?"

The paramour scornfully sent the people away. And then, afraid that his courtesan might become angry if he were late, he asked Basava to stop. He picked up the silk saris with the golden hems that lay in heaps on the floor. He tied them up into a bundle, put as much of it as he could on his shoulders, and brought it home and gave it to his harlot.

"The power of Basava's devotion is real; his lady's modesty was protected," said the assembly of devotees. And Basava's wife went to her inner apartment.

The brilliance of Basava's devotion filled the earth and the sky. The sun set as if the lord of the day, ashamed that his brilliance might appear to be less by comparison, had fallen into the western ocean. The lotuses closed up their petals because their friend was gone. The sounds of conches and drums filled the air. In the inner chambers of the Śaiva temples the sounds of the five great syllables rang out.[19] Darkness fell as if from the clouds of incense smoke in the houses of devotees. The stars shone brilliantly in the sky as if they were lamps offered to Basava by the lady of liberation.

It was as if everything were saying, "When they know how the moon fell, how the king of the demons[20] suffered, how Indra[21] was humiliated, and how King Śūdraka[22] was beheaded for stealing a sheep, how can anyone praise poets who write on themes dealing with lechers and thieves?"[23]

As dusk came on, all the devotees were worshiping the liṅga. Meanwhile, the commander-in-chief sent great bouquets of flowers to the crore of paramour jaṅgamas, along with fruit juice, betel leaves, sandal paste, blossoms, and valuable clothing and ornaments. Bearing these gifts, they went to visit their harlots.

The Story of Innocent Saṅgayya

There was a śaraṇa named Innocent Saṅgayya who had all of his limbs absorbed in the liṅga. When he saw the men, he thought to himself, "They must have been sent by Basava, the treasurer and devotee. They seem to be jaṅgamas, too. And it looks like they are taking sandal paste, flowers, camphor, betel, and such things. This is the time to worship the liṅga. I shouldn't just go on about my daily affairs."

He concluded that what they were doing must be another way of performing the liṅga worship. Even in his dreams he knew nothing of prostitutes.

Saṅgayya went to Basavayya, and he said, "May I join these men as they go out looking for prostitutes?"

When he heard this, Basava smiled and said, "Certainly! Go ahead, Innocent Saṅgayya!" Then he looked at him fondly and made sure that Saṅgayya was appropriately adorned. When he had gotten some attendants to accompany Saṅgayya, Basava sent him to a young woman who was a great devotee.

Innocent Saṅgayya gazed at the woman and thought, "Is this maiden from the world of the pramathas? Or is she actually one of Rudra's courtesans? She looks like a picture. Is this really a woman or is this a gold statue?"

The woman came and fell at the feet of the innocent paramour. Devotedly the expert courtesan took a basin and washed his feet. Without hesitation she sipped the water that ran off the feet. Joyfully she served him ashes and betel. After his attendants had left, she gave her hand to Saṅgayya and led him along.

The steps of the mansion were made of quartz; the floors were made of gold. Designs made with powdered pearls were drawn on plaster made of musk. In the greenhouse, which was decorated with pillars and railings, were strings of gems and large gems that served as lamps.

There also was a glistening wood cot and a down mattress decked with flowers. A light breeze wafted through the windows, carrying all kinds of pleasant fragrances.

Saṅgayya thought, "Is this the celestial throne of Lord Rudra himself? Is this the flying chariot that belongs to Gauri's husband? Is this the pleasure palace of he who wears Gaṅga on his head?[24] Is this the house that belongs to Kāma Killer?"

When he saw the exquisitely beautiful bed, the paramour was completely amazed. He thought that it must be the place where the woman performed liṅga worship. So, instead of sitting on the bed, which to him seemed like a great throne, he spread a blanket on the ground and sat down to perform his worship of Śiva.

As he smeared ashes all over his entire body, he asked, "Lady, why[25] don't you put ashes on your body?"

She replied, "Pārvati always uses this kind of yellow ash. This very evening a gentleman gave it to me. See how I have spread it all over my body." And she showed him her shining, turmeric-covered body.

Then he put on his rudrākṣa beads. "Lady, why don't you put on your rudrākṣa?" he asked.

"I can't tolerate dark rudrākṣa that grows on the shores of the salty ocean. So a gentleman brought me white rudrākṣa from the shores of the milk ocean. I wear them all the time, and that is why they have become so smooth," she said. And she showed him her pearl necklaces.

Saṅgayya was very surprised. He looked at her pearl tiara and the pearl that she wore in her nose. "But on your head, lady? Wearing rudrākṣa on one's head is something completely new to me. I have never before heard of such a thing. It is also very intriguing to me to see you wearing rudrākṣa in your nose."

"My lord! What can I say? God alone understands these things. They are even beyond the Veda," she said.

He touched her braids and said, "O lady with flashing eyes, why don't you wear matted hair?"

"I leave half of it unmatted for flowers from worship. The other half I mat. See how it hangs down my back all sprinkled with ashes," she said. And she showed him the decorative tassels at the ends of her necklaces.

"O lady with the bright eyes, you are a very great devotee. Why don't you wear a truss?" he said.

"I do. In fact, I wear a truss all over my body. It is meant to shield my body from the gaze of the ordinary people who do not wear the liṅga," she said. And she showed him her full sari.

Convinced that she was wearing most extraordinary symbols, he fell prostrate before her. "Who is it that teaches these kinds of symbols? What precepts are involved? What rituals are required? Where do the people of your guru's tradition engage in their ascetic practices? In whose company do they spend time? Tell me all of these things," he said.

"Our venerable teacher is the daughter of the mountain. When she was performing austerities on Mount Kailāsa, Śiva found her appealing. She was initiated into the vow of Śiva by Vāmadevayogi[26] according to the āgamas and Vedas. And she received these symbols from him who bears the trident. We are among the followers of the woman who won over Kāma, pleased Śiva, and acquired half of his body. We are the offspring of the most beautiful lady in the universe, the lady who, with her power, rules all the worlds. We are disciples of the beautiful lady who has acquired all the well-known śāstras, including the secret of Śiva, from Śiva himself. First, we get our milk from consecrated cows. Then we boil it down to one-eighth part of it, put a handful of sugar into it, and offer it to our personal liṅgas. We always regard this part of the food as our prasāda. When devotees give us roots, fruit, leaves, and vegetables, we offer them to the lord and take only the prasāda for ourselves. We never eat ordinary food. What more can I say of our austerity? We share the experience of the jaṅgamas without the slightest separation from them. They give up their bodies, minds, and money, and make our home their home,[27] with good taste and involvement. And when we have good company, to share the experience of the jaṅgama, we never deviate from it. O pure one, our path is the thrice-daily worship of the liṅga. Day and night we are engaged only in this, and we have no other path but this. Our path is to follow the jaṅgamas in mind, body, and deed. This is the great path. This is our true vow. This is our conduct. This is our sign. In Śrīśailam and everywhere else, there are people who belong to our great tradition. Lord, we are all equal to Jagadamba.[28] There are also many of us in Dākṣārāma,"[29] she said, speaking very eloquently.

The gentleman was amazed. He thought that the lady's bed was Śiva's throne. Naturally, he expected to find sandal paste and betel there, and he looked around for them.

"Bring water and other things for worship," he called.

"I must do everything I can to please him," she thought. With a smile on her face, she brought water in golden vessels, and she provided him with a plate. Then she assembled everything that was necessary for worship and gave to Innocent Saṅgayya. As he rang bells and bronze cymbals, offering the incense, she brought him a plate containing a flame offering. The flames mixed with the sparkle of her necklaces, the flashing of her bracelets, and the shining of her eyes. The whole glittered so that it would have been impossible for anyone to look at it.

Just then the moon rose in the eastern sky as if to say, "Even though Śiva wears me in his hair, he has been unable to erase my black spot. But by touching the feet of the devotees I will be purified."

White moonlight spread over the sky like the pure fame of Basava, like the white ashes on Śiva's body, like the whiteness of Rudra's teeth when he laughs, and like the light from the silver mountain.

To make Innocent Saṅgayya happy and to make his heart overflow, the lady called several beautiful women to assist her in dancing the worship of the liṅga.

"Akka Mahādevi, bring the drums and prepare to play them. Basava Pramathavva, play the clarion. Sakaḷavva, you and Saṅgaḷavva stand up together. Bāla Rudrama, you play the drone; Guḍḍavva, you play the flute. Śivadevi, you play the finger cymbals. You should know exactly how the dance is supposed to go. Saṅgudāsama! Maheśvari! Vīrabhadraliṅgavva! You will perform *keḷika*. Purātamma, you come along; put on your best sari and blouse and tighten your waistband. You can dance here, too. When the wave offerings are made, all of you must have cymbals ready and play them in unison," she said.

The first notes sounded; the curtain was brought and they stood behind it. They danced for the worship of the liṅga with a primary mood, postures, gestures, dhūkaḷi, *jhankaḷi*,[30] grandeur, dalliance, and grace. And the auspicious voices sounded in unison until the coming of the dawn. While the women of the retinue served Innocent Saṅgayya, he performed the liṅga rituals.

The sun climbed the eastern mountain as if to say, "By receiving water from the feet of Manohara, I have gained a divine body. If I can now enjoy the full blessings of service from all the devotees of Maheśvara, I will be released from the tiresome task of going about from place to place without any rest."

Then, to Basava's delight, the paramour returned and said, "Basava, God alone knows the orgies I have engaged in this night. You weren't with us, but I assure you it was one uninterrupted delight all night long until morning. And while I was engaged in this debauchery, I was thinking of you. Never since I was born have I known such pleasure. Do ordinary lovers, those who do not enjoy Malahara's grace, experience such orgies? Will you tell me how many days and nights in succession you have engaged in such behavior in order to get from Parameśa all the riches that the liṅga can give to you? Can there be any other way of gaining all the auspicious things that the liṅga has to give?

"Because of you I was able to have this experience last night. O treasurer, with your permission, I have lived at Śrīśailam since my early childhood. I have lived all alone in the peerless forests of banana and *bilva* trees. There are gaṇas there who have eyes on the soles of their feet and eyes on their foreheads. I have seen them myself. But I have never before seen one who follows this ritual way of putting ashes on the body. She had yellow ashes all over her body! She had white rudrākṣa beads. Her braids were red. She had a truss that wrapped completely around her. Her dress was really very strange! What more can I say about a person who wears such religious symbols; who is so indifferent to the world; who has taken such strong vows? But why do I go on talking only about her? Every lady in her retinue had the same marks. Only Śiva himself knows their power."

As he narrated every little detail of the lady's marks and his own venery, all the other jaṅgamas kept asking him questions as they laughed and slapped each other's hands.

Enjoying himself immensely, Basava looked at Cĕnnabasava and said, "Such strong devotion; such simplicity; such efficacy. Where else are they to be found? Are the devotees of Three Eyes such innocents that they know only Īśvara and nothing else?"

In response to this, Cĕnnabasava bowed to him with folded hands and said, "Among the excellent gaṇas and the devotees of the past and the present, is there, or has there ever been, anyone else as innocent as this?"

Basava, the treasurer of devotion, began to tell him some more stories of innocent devotees.

The Story of Rudrapaśupati[31]

"Once upon a time a singer of stories was reading from the ancient purāṇa.[32] He was reading the story about the churning of the milk ocean. A devotee named Rudrapaśupati of the village of Aḷayūru listened as the singer told how Black Neck, after Brahma, Viṣṇu, and all the demons and gods had run away in fear, drank the poison that was burning the entire universe. When Rudrapaśupati heard this, he was concerned whether it was really true that Bharga[33] had swallowed the poison.

" 'There is no question about it! We don't know what happened after that, but Hara really did drink the poison,' they said.

"Rudrapaśupati was shocked when he heard this, and he fell down as if his backbone had broken. 'Aaah! Abominable!' he cried as he rolled on the earth. 'Lord, they have made a fool of you! Even a madman would not drink poison! Can anyone swallow poison and live? How can I stand to listen to this? But what can I do? Three Eyes, there is no one else but you to protect me. Who will support me? Pināki,[34] if only for my sake, won't you spit out that poison? I will bow down to you. Alas! Pārvati, you yourself are half of his body. Where have you gone? Gauri, don't you know what is happening? O pramatha gaṇas! You are his best friends. Will it be within your power to protect him after he is dead? O you hundred rudras! O you countless hosts! Come and protect Pārvati's husband. O Vīrabhadra! The lord of my life has swallowed poison! What is going to happen to him? O ancients! Can my mentor live after swallowing poison? Keep my guru's lord from dying. Bless and protect Śiva! Is there anyone who will watch out for someone who has no mother? If he did have a mother, would she have let him drink poison? If Parameśa survives this time, he will never die!' Sobbing, he said, 'I cannot bear to hear anything more. I am going to commit suicide.' And without a moment's hesitation he went and jumped into a deep pond of water.

"Then Hara appeared, accompanied by Pārvati, the pramathas, the rudras, and all the other gods and demons who were worshiping him. He quickly grabbed Rudrapaśupati so that he did not fall. 'Ask for a boon, and I will give you whatever it is that you desire,' he said.

"Amazed, Rudrapaśupati fell at Mṛḍa's lotus feet. Then that scholar said, 'There is really nothing that I want from you. But I just cannot bear to hear what will happen as a result of your having swallowed that poison. Spit that deadly poison out at once. That is all the boon I want.'

"While the brilliance of his teeth shone in all directions, Śiva smiled, tried to console Rudrapaśupati, and said, 'I just wanted to get famous in these worlds; it is not a big matter to either swallow it or spit it out. There is just a little of that stuck in my throat; not much to speak of. Why should you grieve?'

" 'I really don't believe you, Pināki. If that poison slowly makes its way to your stomach, it won't be long before we hear the bad news. I cannot bear to hear that news. I will surely die just a little while before you do. If you don't want me to die, spit out the poison. Don't try to give me any more of an answer,' he said. And he steadfastly held to his demand.

"At this point Uma became upset and thought, 'If he doesn't spit it out, this innocent man will die.'

"Meanwhile, Viṣṇu and the others began to shiver with fear. 'If he does spit it out, everything will be burned,' they thought.

"The pramathas extolled the man's innocent devotion and attended to him with great enthusiasm.

"Moon on the Head smiled, swiftly pulled him up, embraced him, and said, 'I make an oath on the pramathas, and I make an oath on your feet. I am not going to die as a result of this poison! Believe me! Just climb up here where you can keep a constant watch on my black throat.' And he placed him on his right thigh.

"Is there any limit to the power of an innocent soul?

" 'The moment that it moves, I will die,' he said. And he drew his sword, and held it ready against his chest.

"As he watched, his eyes never blinked.[35] Even today Rudrapaśupati remains constantly there on the lord's thigh."

The Story of Nakka Nāyanāru

"In the Coḍa[36] country there lived a gaṇa named Nīla Nakka Nāyanāru.[37] One day he and his wife were happily performing the worship of the Śiva liṅga when a spider crawled across Lord Śiva.

" 'Śiva! Śiva! It may cause him to blister,' she said as she blew it off.

"Angrily the man said to his wife, 'You sinner! What do you mean by blowing on the lord of our life and letting your saliva fall upon him? Don't you have any other way of showing your devotion? Go! You are no longer my wife!' And she walked away.

"That night when he was worshiping the liṅga, the man realized that it was blistered everywhere except for the part where his wife had blown her breath. Surprised, he quickly ran after his wife, prostrated himself devotedly at her feet, and said, 'I called you a sinner and told you to get out. O great devotee, forgive my sin! Except for the area where you blew, the god's entire body is blistered. Blow on the other side as well and cure my god of his ailment.'

"Then the woman came and looked at the lord of her husband's life. And she was deeply grieved at the blisters that she saw.

" 'Are these blisters going to disappear now? I should have told him to kill me if he would. But instead I stopped blowing when he told me to quit. Now it is my fault that Śiva's body is completely covered with these blisters. But then, didn't the blisters disappear when I blew on the other side? Why shouldn't these disappear as well? It is my fault that this has happened to Pināki. I can't stand to see this ailment any longer,' she said. The lady devotee was sorely grieved and attempted to cut off her own head.

"When he heard what that woman said, Pārvati's husband—he who is the greatest healer of the disease of birth and death, the indestructible, the unborn—decided to make the lady's innocent devotion known to everyone. Suddenly he appeared and stood before them. Accompanied by the pramathas, the rudras, Brahma, Acyuta,[38] Indra, and all the other gods, he floated both of them on the ocean of his compassionate looks, and said, 'Ask me for whatever you want, and I will give it to you.'

"Then the husband and wife prostrated themselves before him and said, 'God! Lord of the gods! Divine liṅga! What else do we need when you yourself are here? If we were to ask for anything else, wouldn't that imply that we did not want you? Therefore, grant us the wealth of thinking only of your lotus feet.'

"When Śiva, the personification of boundless bliss, heard this, he granted the husband and wife eternal fame and the full pleasure of liberation."

The Story of Bĕjja Mahādevi

"And listen to this as well. A lady named Bĕjja Mahādevi, one whose inner mind was absorbed in the auspicious lotus feet of Black Neck, thought, 'It is indeed very strange. In spite of the fact that he has all kinds of staff, many relatives, and a large number of attendants, Bharga doesn't have a mother. How was he even born without a mother? Perhaps the mother of the lord of the three worlds is dead. Alas! What can be done about this? Wasn't I very sad when my mother died? Doesn't everyone experience such grief? But if he did have a mother, how could she have let him become an ascetic? If he had a mother, how could she allow him to drink poison? If he had a mother, how could she let him wear an animal skin? How could a mother let him wear snakes? Would a mother let her son wear ashes all over his body? Would a mother let her son wander about all over the world? Could a mother let her son live in a cremation ground?[39] The only explanation is that he does not have any mother. That is why he has become such a rascal and gotten into so much trouble.

" 'If he did have a mother to nurse him, she would have served him butter and given him a lot of milk. She would have been fully aware of when he was hungry, and she would have given him enough milk to fill his stomach. She would have lovingly cared for him, and she would have raised him affectionately.

" 'Even without a mother he is very big. If he had had a mother, imagine how big he would have become. No matter how big a boy is, wouldn't he grieve without a mother to take care of him at the time of marriages, domestic festivals, feast days, and celebrations? Is it right to remain silent when a thing like this is going on? Let me become Hara's mother. And let me take care of him. A woman who will take care of him without holding back anything will be the right mother for him,' she thought. And Bĕjja Mahādevi began to think of herself as Parameśa's mother, and he became her son.

"She poured oil on the liṅga and gave him a shampoo.[40] She wiped his nose. She scrubbed his cheeks. She washed his third eye. She wiped his belly, and she patted his back. She wanted the boy to grow big, so she pulled his arms and legs as she massaged them. She rubbed his body with cleaning paste. She held him affectionately. She poured water on his back. She massaged his spine so that he would not be afraid. With both hands cupped, she poured water over his head. Afraid that some water might get into his mouth, she pressed his stomach and put her hand across his mouth to keep it out. She put turmeric on his body and bathed him. She blew into his eyes and ears to clear them. With her finger she pressed his palate. She immediately wiped off the water that dripped from his body. She took water in her hand and sprinkled it on the earth. And taking a pinch of soil, she applied it as a mark with her thumb. She took the softest ashes that clung to the edge of the pot, and she applied them to her son's forehead. Afraid that she might stunt his growth by carrying him too much, she gave him a hug and let him down. Wanting to make his eyes larger, she put lampblack around them. When she applied the lampblack, all of his eyes became one. She gave him milk from her breast, and she did not let birds fly over his head.[41] She gave him a little butter. She slapped his cheeks with her fingers and made him open his mouth and cry. Then she put one finger in his mouth and gave him a little mixture of castor oil and milk. After that she consoled him, pacified him, and caressed him. She kissed him to make him laugh and begged him for kisses in return. She asked him who he was. She made her belly into a bed for him and sang him gentle lullabies. When she did all this and raised him like her own son, Śiva praised her for her innocent, steadfast devotion. And he stayed there and accepted all the services she rendered to him as a son.

" 'Śruti says, "He has no other form." Smṛti says, "A devotee shall always think of (him)," and, further, it says, "He takes the form in which the devotee thinks of him." Since these are the words of Hara, how can they be wrong? Isn't it true that however a devotee conceives of Śiva, that is the form in which he appears?' said the assembly of devotees, praising her.

"After some days had passed, the God of gods wanted to bestow his grace on his mother, so he feigned a terrible sickness. He did not open his mouth to nurse, and he did not open his mouth to take butter. The mother was shocked. Unable to control her grief, she said, 'My father! My boy! My infant! My little bachelor! My little man! Why don't you suck my breasts? When I see your perspiration, my blood runs cold. Auw! How can I even look at you? Am I not your mother? Can I bear all of this? I have no one else but you! You are my only son, and I have no other! How can I be silent and keep from grieving? My legs are no longer able to stand on the earth! Why don't you say something and tell me what is wrong? Do you have a sore throat? Is your throat blistered? Do you have a sore palate? I have no idea what medicine will make it better.'

"She talked deliriously. She fell down and rolled on the floor. Her body boiled up. She embraced the boy. She covered him up, uncovered him, and covered him up again. She kept watching him and became even more agitated. His belly became bloated. People told her that it was a sore palate. Beside herself with fear, she fell into an ocean of grief.

"When she saw the condition that her son was in, the woman said, 'You were still a little bit hungry and so you went to Ŏḍaya Nambi's.[42] But there was nothing to get there and nothing to eat. You went to Cerama Cakravarti[43] and danced to his music, and you became weak from hunger. Then you realized that those useless activities were not going to fill your stomach, and you quickly came back. So you went and did the king's unpaid labor for Piṭṭavva.[44] Finally, you found yourself a little something to eat. In the Sāmavedulu's[45] house a calf had died, and they cooked it and fed it to you. And you ate it! Then you went to Karikāḷavva's[46] house and secretly ate mangoes. You went to Cĕnnayya's[47] house and gobbled up the leftover rice without even letting your hand rest. You asked Ciṙutŏṇḍa Nambi[48] for the flesh of his son, and you made a feast of that. Without even pausing, you went on to Nimmavva's[49] house and ate there, too. As if that were not enough, Coḍavva gave you[50] something salty in a bowl, and you ate that, too. You also took morsels of food from the hands of Suriya Cauḍayya.[51] I am afraid that you really did do all these things. I heard all of this from a lady yesterday. My boy! Is it good to put me to all this trouble? Why should you dissipate yourself by acting like that? And then why should you eat more than you can possibly hold? Can you survive if you go on eating everywhere but at home? How can you avoid getting bloated if you do that? I will give you my breast again and again. Furthermore, I will never fail to give you milk and butter. My son, don't you know that I will feed you? Why should you behave like this? What you had was always enough before. But now you go out and ask for food without ever being contented? Didn't you have enough to eat yesterday? I have not kept anything back from you. Day and night you never leave my arms. Can there be any other boy who is so impossible?' She was vexed with him, and she talked intimately with him. Was she not his mother?

" 'Now, are there any mothers in the three worlds who are more affectionate than I am? You yourself are witness to the fact that I am treating you like my own life breath. If you had stayed where I put you and if you had eaten what I gave you, would you have suffered from any disease or felt any pain? Is fire attacked by white ants? You have become sick because of the things that you did to yourself. How else would you get such a disease? What shall we do now? Is talking going to cure your illness? Why should I keep asking about your folly? My son, I cannot bear to see your affliction any longer. Because of you I am going to give up my life breath.'

"As she was about to take it out on her own head, Śiva appeared, stood before his mother, and said, 'Ask whatever you want, and I will give it to you.'

" 'Son! Do I have anything to ask from you? The only thing I could possibly want would be to have you comfortable, well, and live forever. The parent has more love for the child whom she raises than for the child to whom she gives birth.[52] I always want to be able to see you with my own eyes. Therefore, what I really want is to have you stay here with me,' she said.

"With a gentle smile on his lotus face, he embraced his mother and said, 'Because you are my mother, you are the grandmother of the three worlds. Mother, how can a boy ever be sick with a mother like you?' And he gave his mother eternal life.

"Because she had become the mother of a god who is superior and always blissful, she became known as Ammavva."[53]

The Story of Gŏḍagūci

"A devotee of Śiva name Śivadeva was going to another village along with his wife. He asked his youngest daughter to watch the house: 'Don't wander here and there, my girl! Don't go and play with other girls, my girl! We have made a vow, my girl, and you must not break it! Every day you must go to the temple and give a vessel of milk to Śiva, my girl! Our girl! Our mother! Our dear lady! We will bring back a fine doll and some doll dresses.'

"After they had entrusted the job to her and left, she washed her hands and face. She got milk from a good cow, boiled it, and poured out a measure of it into a cup. She covered the cup with her soft upper cloth and went directly to the Śiva temple. There she put the cup of milk before him, bowed down, and said, 'Drink it, O God!' Then she stepped back and stood a short distance away.

"But when she came back and looked, there was no less milk than there had been. The girl was agitated and frightened. 'O liṅga, why don't you drink the milk? Isn't it boiled enough? Is it because you don't like the taste? Is it milk that is left over from yesterday? Is it sour? Is it because I am a little girl? Is it too late? Does it have a smoky taste? Don't you feel like drinking? Did I forget to put clarified butter into it? Is it too hot? Is it too thin? Is it because I brought it without the accompaniment of musical instruments? Is it insufficient? Do you think that it is not cow's milk?[54] Are you afraid that I intended to drink the milk myself? Is the cup too big? Is there less than a full measure? Did I not offer it to you correctly? Are you afraid that it had been previously offered to another god? Isn't there any cream? Do you think that someone might have glanced at it when I brought it here? Why are you so silent? Why don't you want to drink that milk? If there is some reason, tell me! If you are really not hungry, at least take a sip and leave the rest for me. Why should there be such a fuss about drinking a little milk? If you want, I will bring you a bowl of well-cooked rice. In the pot in the corner there are *pole*.[55] If you send me, I will go and get them. There is clarified butter in the hanging pot. If you want me to, I will bring it right now. There is an earthen pot full of rock candy. I will bring you some if you want it. Tell me at once! Tomorrow, there is a festival at my guru's house. I will invite you. Drink this milk. In my Śaiva sister's *maṭha*[56] there is sweet rice pudding. I will bring that; but first drink the milk. Let's go and see the sixteenth-day[57] festival. O destroyer of the cities, drink this milk. If you drink this milk, I will let you push the chariot at the time of the Vīrabhadra festival. Don't be bashful to ask; if you want me to, I will bring you puffed rice. Just tell me! If you cannot drink with a child by your side when you drink it, come on, we will drink it together. My parents will bring me toy vessels, little dolls, puffed rice, and lots of fruit. And I take a vow before you that I will give them to you if you drink this. The milk is getting cold. Liṅga, why do you give me all this trouble?' she said.

"The little girl kept bowing to Īśvara. Then she got angry with him. She was about ready to jump on him. She yelled at him. She cried in front of him. She cracked her knuckles. She stamped the ground with her feet. She fell on the floor and kicked her hands and feet. She looked at the cup and then at Kāma Killer. She cajoled him. She fell on the floor as if she were dead, and she acted amazed and surprised. She cried and cried. She yelled at the top of her lungs. She jumped up and fell down. She tried to snatch the cup away. But, being afraid, she again put it in front of him. Again and again she bowed at his feet.

" 'Well, it looks as if you are not going to drink the milk anyway. You haven't touched it. You haven't even smelled it! If you do not drink it, my parents will kill me for sure. I am going to die one way or the other. Let me die right here,' she said.

"Just as she was about to bash her head against the liṅga, he caught her. With a compassionate smile on his face, Rudra raised the cup of milk and drank it.

" 'It is because I am such a little girl that you have given me so much trouble. You thought that I would just go away. Now I am going to tell my father. That is all there is to it, Black Neck. Don't you forget it,' she said.

"Then the little girl took the empty cup and went straight home. Every day thereafter she brought milk and gave it to him. Every day Śiva drank the milk.

"When her parents returned from their trip, they met her as she was returning with an empty milk cup from which Mṛḍa, as usual, had drunk. When they saw her, they said, 'Where are you coming from with that empty cup?'

" 'Just as you told me to, I have taken a measure of milk to Mṛḍa in a cup. I have bowed to him and asked him to drink it, and he has done so. As always, I have asked for the cup, and now I am bringing it back,' she said.

" 'Did Īśa ever really drink the milk, little girl? Or did you drink it yourself? Maybe you gave it to the other little girls with whom you play? Did you throw it out somewhere? Have you lost your senses? Even when great devotees have served him and prayed, asking him to take it, such a thing has never happened. If that is the case, is it now possible for others? How do you expect us to believe you?' they said. And they grabbed her and scolded her. 'We'll see if what you say is true,' they said.

"The next day her father had the girl carry the cup of milk, and he accompanied her to the temple. As always, she put the milk in front of Liṅgamūrti. But wishing to demonstrate the girl's innocence and pure devotion, he did not even take it.

"Then Śivadeva became very angry. 'So that's it! Why didn't he drink the milk today? Did Three Eyes touch it or smell it? Tell me! You have been prattling in a most amazing fashion! You little traitor! The whole time you yourself were drinking the milk that was intended for Śiva. Where do you think you are going? I am going to tear your guts out,' he said.

"He was enraged and about to grab her. But the child dashed to Śiva. 'O liṅga! O liṅga! O liṅga!' she cried and started to embrace him.

"At that instant Hara said, 'Never fear! Never fear!' And showing mercy on her, Bhoganātha of Karaḍiga,[58] the lord of pleasure, who is praised throughout the universe, at once opened his chest, and she entered the body of the divine liṅga.

" 'What's this? She is gone!' said her father. And he caught hold of her braid. The hair in her braid was left outside, but the girl herself entered the liṅga.

"From that time on, once every six months, the liṅga's hair has been cut. That is the visible evidence of the girl's steadfast and innocent heart. She is praised and called Gŏḍagūci, and she has flourished with great power."

The Story of Dīpadakaḷi[59]

"And then there was another. In the city of Kañci[60] lived a resolute devotee named Dīpadakaḷi. Once on his way to another town, he found Hara somewhere in a ruined temple. 'Tsk! Tsk! Here is Śiva all by himself in a wilderness. And he has a lot of enemies. He made the sages tie on chastity belts. He gave salvation to the demons. He forced Indra and the rest of the gods to perform drudgery day and night so that they didn't even have time to close their eyes for an instant. He agitated the twelve suns so that they could not quietly follow their paths. He disembodied the god Kāma. He burned the cities that could not be burned. He made a fool of Viṣṇu. He made Brahma subject to fate.[61] When he was being worshiped as the compassionate one, he destroyed everything. For all these reasons, the God of gods has many enemies. How can he stay in this forest? The temple is dilapidated and broken down. The porch is in ruins. The wall has collapsed. The doors are rotten, and they have fallen down. Uma, the lady who took half of his body, is nowhere to be seen. Perhaps she had herself absorbed into Śiva's body because she was afraid. The lone bull has covered his head in grief with fodder. There is a lot of trash around. There is no evidence that a priest has ever performed worship here since the day that Śiva manifested in this place. Why a thousand words? It is dangerous for Śiva to stay here without any help. Is it going to protect Rudra, the killer, to make empty statements about what a great warrior he is and how he can protect himself even if he is alone here?' he thought.

"He resolved to stay in that place. At once he sent for all of the wealth that he had in his house, all of his material possessions, and even the potsherds. He renovated the temple and the porch. Around it he dug a moat. He built a fort, battlements, bastions, gates, and crooked paths. Around the moat he threw up a curved bank. He constructed a gatehouse. He hung flags, banners, and festoons. He planted umbrellas on the battlements and the bastions to suggest that there were many warriors. He brought great quantities of joints, gems, beams, rock, polishing stones, stones for fighting, and sand. All these things he put in their proper places on the battlements. In this way he renovated the entire fort. Inside it he dug a deep well with steps. He constructed granaries and filled them with grain. Around the temple he planted trees: *bilva, aśoka, surabhi, guggulu, kramuka,* and others. He planted marjoram, *davanamu, mācipattiri,* and many gardens of flowers. He appointed guards, torch bearers, spearmen, temple priests, slingshot men, goldsmiths, servants, people under vows, gatekeepers, ritual authorities, bowmen, and watchmen.

"With boundless energy, he and the others worked on the construction. All day and all night, they ceaselessly played the five great instruments.[62] People were amazed, and they praised the fort, saying that it was clear that it could not be taken by even great warriors like Brahma and Viṣṇu.

"For a time he remained there and enjoyed great fame. But all of his wealth was consumed in the cause. In the end he was unable to pay the temple servants. But still he did not lose courage. For a while he walked around the area, crying loudly. Then he planted a pair of torches. With that it was even greater than it had been before. The bells on his waist rang. The cymbals resounded. The waist bells, chest bells, and little bells tinkled.

"He said, 'All is well! All is well!' And he went from one station to the other, without missing a single post in the temple. With a thousand faces, without omitting the performance of a thousand jobs, he alone manned the ramparts and did a great deal of work. In this way he toiled throughout the nights. When he realized that there was no oil left for any of the torches, he brought logs and burned them as thickly placed pairs of lamps. In this way he passed his time. At last there was not a stump, not a tree, not a branch, not even a stick of firewood. Even if it had been for medicine, there was nothing left that could be called wood. At this juncture, he collected grass, twisted it into rope torches, and commenced burning them in pairs.

"He spent some more days roaming about the area. Finally, he was unable to find a piece of grass as big as a toothpick or even a single leaf, weed, or piece of straw. He wondered what to do. Then he took off all his clothes, including his loincloth, made them into a wick, and lit it. When he used this as a pair of lamps, it burned brilliantly and lit up the sky like lightning. In this way he made his rounds. At last even that was gone.

"Then he was agitated, and he was afraid that enemies might enter under cover of darkness. Quickly he braided his hair and used the braid for a lamp. He thought, 'This will take care of it for tonight.' And as always, he made his rounds. All of Dīpadakaḷiyār's[63] braid was burned, and the fire came close to burning his head.

"Śambhu, who is worshiped by Lotus Eyes, Lotus Born, and the performer of a hundred sacrifices, and who is the destroyer of Kāma, the killer of the killer,[64] the endlessly blissful, the husband of Ambika, who is the object of the three worlds' worship, the divine-bodied, the birthless, Śiva, manifested, stood before him, and floated the heroic and generous man, Dīpadakaḷiyār, on the ocean of his compassion.

" 'Ask me for whatever you want, and I will give it to you,' said Śiva.

"Then Dīpadakaḷiyār fell prostrate on the ground: 'I can think of a thousand pleasing things but there is nothing that I want. Nevertheless, listen to just one request. O God, how can you live in this wilderness? Your body is the divine liṅga. You are the refuge of the entire world. You are the head of the family of devotees. It is not good for you to stay here by yourself. Why should you find other hills, and how can you remain in this wilderness fort, when you have an inaccessible fort like the silver mountain?' With a 'Let's go!' he got the god onto the flying chariot called Puṣpaka, and he himself got aboard as well.

"Then Śiva took Dīpadakaḷiyār, the temple, the porch, the fort, and all the surrounding area to Kailāsa.

"In every world there are devotees who have been praised by him who destroyed the cities and who have accompanied him to Kailāsa in their bodies. But has there ever been another devotee in the whole world who took a temple and a liṅga along with him? Isn't it amazing to think about it?

" 'This is a kind of devotion that has never been seen before.'

"While the gods, demons, and people praised him thus, the crest jewel of heroic devotion, Dīpadakaḷi, demonstrated this degree of innocence."

The Story of Nāṭya Namittaṇḍi

"Not only that. In Kañci lived a devotee of Mṛḍa called Nāṭya Namittaṇḍi, the best of Śiva's devotees. One day he was full of devotion and went to the temple of Ekāmranātha. There he saw Kūttāḍi

Nāyanāru:[65] the form of true bliss, the dancing form, the magnanimous form, he who incarnated to kill the elephant demon, he who bears the crescent moon on his head, he who has an eye on his forehead, he who is the black-necked god, he who bears the trident and the cot's leg as weapons.

"Nāṭya Namittaṇḍi said to the temple priest, 'Īśvara's waist is twisted to one side. He is all twisted up. Gauri's husband's arms are swollen. His legs are bent in three places. They don't seem to be able to hold him up. It looks as if Śiva has only one foot. His other foot looks as if it is in his thighs, as if it has been withered by sickness. Śiva's three eyes are set as if he is dying, and his eyelids seem unable to close. Malahara's head is unable to remain erect, and it is tilted to one side. Mṛḍa's matted red hair is not properly tied up. This is amazing! What is the meaning of this?'

"The Śaiva brahmin priest laughed and said, 'Your Śiva has become sick. He has rheumatism, an imbalance of wind in his body. If this is not brought under control, Kāma Killer will be in grave danger. If you even stop to think of anything else, and thereby delay, Śiva's entire body will become bent and broken. I know the medicine that is needed for this. You must try to get it so that I can cure him.' He said this in jest.

"Nāṭya Namittaṇḍi, the liṅga wearer, believed in his heart that it was true. At once he went and brought all the money and material possessions from his house, and set them before the brahmin.

" 'Take all of it. If you cure Śiva's disease, I, my wife, and my sons will become your slaves. One way or the other you must perform this meritorious deed,' he said.

"Then the brahmin took all the money, and when he returned, he said, 'I have brought wind oil and made it into a medicine.' And he brought a little castor oil, heated it until it was lukewarm, gave it to the man, and told him what to do with it.

"Then the man took the wind oil and at once rubbed it on the body of the destroyer of Māya. He gathered *vāvili* leaf buds, *ummĕtta* leaf buds, *takkĕḍu* leaf buds, castor leaf buds, ripe *jilleḍu* leaves, and other herbs, and he washed Śiva's entire body. He repeatedly warmed his hands with hot sand and then touched the lord's body with his palms. He also gave him appropriate kinds of foods. And he never failed to do everything that needed to be done.

"After some days had passed in this way, the devotee looked at Black Neck and said, 'All these days have gone by, and yet there has not been the slightest improvement in Pārvati's husband's body. It really seems to be true. Whatever my illusions have been, can leaves from the forest, weeds, roots, and so on, possibly cure Kāma Killer's disease?

Why should I delay any longer? I am the only doctor who can cure Śiva's rheumatism.'

"And he resolved on what to do. Without a moment's hesitation, he attempted to take his own life.

"Śiva; Pārvati's husband; he who shows compassion on the devotees; Śarva; he who has recently taken on a pleasant form; he who is respected by the gods; the lord of everything; the all-knower; he who is worshiped by Aja, Hari, and the performer of a hundred sacrifices; the lover of dance; he who bears the trident in his hand; he appeared, stood before Nāṭya Namittaṇḍi, embraced him, and said, 'O you of great fame, I commend you. Ask whatever you want, and I will give it to you.'

" 'O Abhava,[66] there is nothing that I want from you. Your divine body has been twisted out of shape. Is this a disease? Or is it natural? O you who are worshiped by the best of yogis, tell me what is the matter,' he said.

" 'This is my dancing form. If you want to know more about it, I will tell you. I stand joyful and ready for the dance. When I take up the hourglass drum, I make the sound, "Ho," play it once, and everything in the universe is destroyed. When I kick my foot, the rows of stars start falling down. When I cast my furious glances about, Aja, Acyuta, and the other gods are struck with fear. When my bells and gongs begin to sound, that half of my body which is Devi[67] is fearful and enters my body. Because of the powerful clapping of my hands, all the corners of space move away. Because of my forceful inhalations and exhalations, the fire under the ocean is put out, and all the ocean is dried up. Under the stamping of my feet as I dance, the entire earth is pulverized into dust. When I stand and spin around, the elephant protectors of the corners of space begin to quake. When I utter the sound "Tam," all the chief mountains become powder. When I dance on my toes, the tortoise below gets confused. When it is struck by the locks of my matted hair, the cosmic egg, which is space, is broken. The assemblage of elements is shattered when my crown strikes them. In the speed of my dance, the lord of snakes, whom I wear as a necklace, gets tired and pants. When the lord of serpents pants, it causes the fire of my open third eye to grow brighter. In the brilliance of this fiery eye, the moon on my hair melts. Because the moon melts, ambrosia flows off my head. Immersed in the flood of ambrosia that pours from my head, things begin to come alive. The skulls of the gods and demons—Brahma, Acyuta, and the rest who adorn my head, neck, and arms as ornaments—begin asking for refuge. They roar. They cry out. I get excited. They make mournful sounds. I dance and turn to the appropriate music. While the accompanying songs are sung and the pramathas watch, I do my dance. Therefore, I have this dancing form, and the devotees always worship me with that in mind,' he said.

"Then the God of gods gave the order. With great love, demonstrating his power, he took Nāṭya Namittaṇḍi to Kailāsa while the true devotees and the good people praised him."

The Story of Uḍumūri Kannappa

"Near Śrī Kāḷahasti[68] Mountain lived an eminent devotee of Black Neck named Uḍumūri Kannappa.[69] One day he went hunting in the wilderness. While he and his *ĕrukula*[70] companions were hunting in a brushy area, he became tired and fell asleep. Īśa then came to him in a dream. He came as an ascetic who bore the marks of Rudra. The ascetic made him sit down and then applied ashes to his forehead, anointed him with Śiva water, and said, 'Go forward and you will see a great liṅga. That will be your prāṇa liṅga.'

"When he awoke, Kannappa did as he had been instructed. He looked around on all four sides. In front of him was a path that had not been there before. 'My dream has already come true,' he thought.

"So he asked the ĕrukulas who were with him to remain behind while he went on alone. As he went along, he saw a great liṅga before him. Kannappadeva was delighted and bowed down to it devotedly.

"He thought, 'I have taken my basket to the place I saw in my dream, and it has been filled with fruit. Am I not fortunate? This is the very liṅga to which the ascetic in my dream referred. He said that it would become the lord of my life breath.

" 'It is not right for me to leave the liṅga of my life breath behind. I must take him to my village and build a hut for him. I cannot leave him where he will be scorched by the sun. I will advise him. I will cajole him. I will appease him and win him over. I will tantalize him. I will bring him whatever he needs. I will make him love to be taken by me,' he thought.

"His body swelled with happiness. And with great innocence he spoke to Hara: 'Alas! What is the meaning of this, Hara? Why are you here all by yourself? Did you become angry with the temple priests of some village? And did you turn your head away from them and come here? Tell me what happened, and I will soothe your anger. Did you come to this great wilderness because the *gŏragas*[71] worshiped you with thorn apple leaves? And did those leaves make you a little crazy? Or did you flee from Śrīśailam because of the unbearable crowds? Maybe you came to this forest because your two wives would not stop fighting[72] over your body and the hair on your head? Or maybe you came here when people started saying that you lost your caste when you met Cĕnnayya? Are you hiding here because you got tired of doing so many favors for Nambi?[73] Did you come down here to hunt for the ancient Brahma because he had become unjust.[74] But why do I go on talking? Did you come here to bless me because you loved me? Where *did* you come from? What have you done to yourself? How can you live like this? How long do you plan to stay here? Tell me where your bull mount is, and I will go and fetch him! Where is the lady, Uma, who is the other half of your body? Won't people laugh at you when they see you all alone? Where did you lose your loincloth? Why did you come to this forest alone and without anything? Your shoulder bag is not strong—how could you move about without fear all alone? Moon on the Head, aren't you afraid to stay here alone in these hills? There are an infinite number of beasts and snakes. I am not joking! It *is* dangerous for you to stay here.

" 'The ĕrukulas will be the servants, and you will be the master. Black Neck, there are many comforts in our village. There is very good milk from the buffalo cows of the forest. There is wild-rice pudding, lizard oil, *ippa*[75] flower honey, all kinds of fruit, and bamboo rice. And if you really want to eat, there are many kinds of meat. Please come! I will bow down to you, O God of gods! Aren't you likely to die of dried-up intestines if you stay here?'

"But even when Kannappa bowed at his feet, Īśvara did not respond. Then the man thought to himself, 'Perhaps he has not eaten for a long time. Kāma Killer is probably unable to talk because he is so hungry. So why go on paining his ears with my talk? Why don't I just bring something for Śiva to eat?'

"Then Kannappa went out to see what he could find in the way of roots, vegetables, and animals.

"Jīmūtavāhana, Śibi, and Kīrtimukha[76] went to the earth one time. There they did not know that they should offer their bodies to Śiva, so they gave them for other purposes. They became very famous for their heroism, but they were not absorbed into the liṅga. Being aware of this, some great demons called Saundarya and Mahākāya performed austerities. This pleased Bharga very much, and he appeared before the demons and said, 'Ask for liberation or the pleasures of heaven. Or ask for anything else that is associated with Viṣṇu, Brahma, or Indra. And I will give those things to you at once.'

"At this, the demons fell prostrate and said, 'Our Jalandhara[77] already made Viṣṇu's world his own. So do you think that is anything rare for us? We surely don't want to ask you for the same status as Brahma. He was killed by our own elephant demon, Gajāsura.[78] And what can we say of Indra's status? He was thoroughly shaken and brought to ruin by our Tāraka.[79] Vyāghra,[80] Andhaka,[81] and the other demons were enemies of Śiva, and so you killed them. And through that they gained liberation. Is it great to gain liberation by being your devotee? God! You are bliss! Your body is the divine liṅga! God! Great God! God of gods! We know what it is to be gods. We are familiar with all the pleasures. And we do not want any of them! Have compassion on us! Take these great beautiful bodies of ours and eat them as your food!'

"Then Poison Neck said, 'You will be born as deer in the hills near Kāḷahasti. One of my devotees there will kill you. He will cook you and serve you to me. His name will be Kannappa. When he serves you, I will eat you.'

"As soon as he said this, they came here with their wives and children. They were born as deer in the vicinity of this liṅga. They moved about completely unseen by others. But when Kannappa approached the herd of deer, he humbled an animal with every arrow. He brought staves. He spitted the deer. He built a fire. He carefully looked for the best meat, cut it up into small pieces, and cooked it. As he cooked it, he diligently turned it. As he roasted it, he constantly tended it. As he cut it into small pieces, he tasted it to see how it was coming. The best-flavored meat he put into a leaf cup. He checked it carefully to see that it was not too small and not too hard. He made sure that it was not defective, stringy, tough, or burned. Then he plucked perfect bilva leaves and put them on his disheveled hair. He took pure water from the Mogaleru[82] and filled his two cheeks. Kannappa approached the liṅga with his bows and arrows in his left hand and the leaf cup with the meat in it in his right hand. With a sandaled foot he kicked off the articles from the previous worship. With the water that he brought in his cheeks, he bathed Śiva. He dropped the leaves off his head. And he offered the meat he had brought in the leaf cup. In this way Kannappadeva very carefully performed the rituals.

"About that time the ascetic who had just been worshiping there returned. He saw everything that had been arranged in front of Parameśvara. 'Who is this barbarous person?' he thought. 'People like him are always doing terrible things like this. What shall I do?'

"The ascetic threw away the pieces of meat, complaining all the while that Śiva's house had been polluted. Then the ascetic bathed the liṅga with the five nectars.[83] He took the water from Śiva's feet and sprinkled it all over the area as he recited the Vedas. And he again performed the worship.

"When he was finished, he kept watch all night to find out what the hunter would do. When he saw what had happened, the ascetic got really agitated and said, 'Auw! Everything is defiled! This is meat, and the water has come from his mouth. Are such things sacred for worship? Is it part of Śaiva devotion to push things aside with sandals? I have never heard of such a thing! How can I possibly tolerate this? He hunts animals, and I am an ascetic. This is a fight between unequals. But how can I say such a thing? Wasn't this the very place where a spider fought with an elephant? I'll tell you that story.

" 'A spider[84] was afraid that Hara was being burned in the sun. So she spun a web over the surrounding trees, grass, shrubs, and vines. And she made them into a curtain. Over it she installed the cornices. She consecrated the image. She made the bell and constructed the platform. She set up the pinnacle. She made gates and doorways. She prepared the terrace and the womb house. Over the doorway she put *karavīra* buds and garlands of hundreds of beautiful lotuses for worship. When these preparations were finished, she worshiped Śiva three times every day.

" 'Some time later, the elephant saw the web that the spider had spun over Hara. When he saw it, he became very angry. "What kind of creature keeps putting these cobwebs over Śiva?" he thought. And he stirred up a big wind by flapping his great ears. With that he swept away the entire spider web. With water from the Mogaleru in his trunk, he anointed Ambika's husband. On his head the elephant brought lotuses and waterlilies. With these he continually worshiped Three Eyes, three times a day.

" 'The spider came back and was very angry. "Some sinner has not only destroyed this beautiful temple that I have erected, but he has also destroyed the ritual objects. How can I tolerate this treachery against Śiva?" she thought.

" 'So she crouched in a corner. When she saw the elephant getting angry again, the spider did not even wait to find out anything more, but became desperate. She skillfully entered the end of the elephant's trunk. Once there, she began to bore a hole. She bored her way to the head of the mighty elephant. And there she killed him.

" 'However big this evil hunter might be, and whoever he might be, if he comes here again, I will not leave this place without killing him,' vowed the ascetic. And he crouched behind the liṅga and waited without showing his face.

"Śaṅkara wanted the ascetic to see Kannappadeva's innocence, his boundless devotion, and the inclination of his heart. So he put on a face with three eyes and made tears flow from the right eye.

"When Kannappa came as before, he saw the tears in Hara's eyes. He was startled, and he felt very much afraid. But, as usual, with a sandaled foot, he kicked off the articles from the previous worship. Abruptly he spat out the water that filled his cheeks. Then he tipped his head so that the leaves fell off. And as was his wont, he humbly offered the meat. It looked as if he had released an inner spring of water on Īśvara to cure his tears. And the water flowed over the leaves, and they became sacred.

"Not only that. The water from the liṅga's head struck Kannappa's feet, parted, and became *pāda*[85] water. The water from Kannappa's mouth mixed with it and became prasāda water. The tears from the corners of the liṅga's eyes became a flood of liṅga water. The three kinds of water[86] on the body of Three Eyes became sacred. This suggested that it is appropriate for the recipient of prasāda to get three kinds of water to purify his mind.

"Water was flowing over the liṅga's entire body and this surprised Sarveśa's[87] devotee, Kannappa. 'What a lot of water there is coming from the corner of his eye,' he thought with alarm. 'Auw! What can it be? Forehead Eye, your eye is watering! Even when Gauri burned because she heard people blaming you, you did not shed a tear. You once had a father cut up his own son,[88] but you did not cry one tear of compassion. Some brahmins tore your clothes and abused you, but you didn't cry. Even when you were pelted with stones,[89] you didn't shed any tears. Once you were caught with another man's wife,[90] but no tears came of that. You did slave labor[91] and carried baskets, but you didn't weep. So why are you crying all these tears now for no apparent reason at all?

" 'Are you grieving because you left your wife and children in order to live in this mountain wilderness? Do you weep because you are overwhelmed by the responsibility of protecting the whole world when you, yourself, are helpless? Maybe you are crying because you were aching from hunger and thought that I wasn't coming? Or maybe you are shedding these tears because you thought that I had been attacked by wild animals. Did you think that I had gone back to my village and left you here alone because I wasn't willing to wait on you? Could it be that you feared for your life when an insect bit you? What is the reason? Why do you shed so many tears? Won't you tell me?' he pleaded.

"And Kannappa embraced the liṅga as if to say, 'Why do you shed tears when you have a son like me?' And he dried the tears from his eyes.

" 'Won't your fellow liṅgas laugh at you because you just go on grieving? Now stop crying, Father! Please stop crying, Father! Don't weep, my lord! Why do you keep carrying on so? It doesn't befit you. Won't you please stop?' pleaded Kannappa. And he tried to dry Śiva's tears.

"Then Kannappa innocently examined the eye as if to remove some dust from it. He lifted the eyelid with his finger. He blew on it gently. He licked the eyeball very carefully with his tongue. And he kept looking and looking for something. He also made his cloth into a ball, blew on it to warm it, and pressed it gently against the eye to soothe it. But the cloth just got soaking wet, and Kannappa became even more troubled.

"When Kannappa pressed one corner of the eye with his finger, the tears flowed from the other corner. When he pressed the second corner, the tears flowed again from the first. When he tried to stop the flow with his fingers at the tear ducts, tears flowed from all over the eye. Even when he tried to cover both the eye and the tear ducts with his palm, the flow did not abate.

"Nothing seemed to work, and Kannappa was beside himself with grief. He fell at Śiva's feet. He clasped and unclasped his hands. He stood up, sat down, and looked all around.

" 'Alas!' cried Kannappa. And he ran round and round the liṅga.

"He thought that it was conceivable that they might be tears of pleasure; but Śiva's face did not look very happy at all. He wondered if they might be tears of compassion; but they were not cool. He considered whether it might just be perspiration; but who ever heard of eyes perspiring? Then he realized that if they were really tears of grief, both eyes would be shedding tears. Tears were only coming from one eye. It had to be a disease of the eye.

"Had the eye developed chicken lids?[92] Was it a sty? Did it suffer from a cataract? Was it abscessed? Was there a stabbing pain caused by a flowering?[93] Might it be dirty? Was there a growth on it? Could it be an *ayira*?[94] Or was it some other disease of the eye? There was no question that something was wrong. But he didn't know what herb to apply to it.

" 'Elder brother! Father! My friend! My lord! My master! Lord of my life breath! Your body is beautiful! Śaṅkara! How could you possibly contract such a disease? Forehead Eye, all three worlds are afraid of you because you have three eyes. You have never suffered from any disease before. What will the gods think of you when they see your eyes? Aren't those who were burned by your eye going to suffer again when they hear the news about your eye? And listen. Even if women are ordinarily blindly in love with you, they are not going to fall for you with this defect. Even your own devotees will laugh at you when they see you in this deformed state. What has come of that imperishable power that you had when you gave an eye to Hari? This is like a buffalo killing a tiger in the field. How can I bear it? Where can I go? What shall I do? There is nothing to say and nothing to do. I can't just stand here and watch this happen. Black Throat, this is the first time in your life that there has ever been anything wrong with your eye. I am going to put my good eye over your sick eye. Maybe my eye will be the medicine that your eye needs,' said Kannappa. And immediately he extracted his eye with an arrow and covered Black Throat's eye with it.

"The tears stopped flowing from Śiva's right eye. But at the same instant they began to flow out of his left eye.

"Seeing that his lotus eye had become Śiva's, Kannappa was so happy that his whole lotus face blossomed into a smile. He was excited to see that his lotus eye was now Śiva's lotus eye. With a sidelong glance, he looked into Śiva's left eye. 'My other eye has to be the cure for that eye. There is no question about it,' he thought. So to stop the tears that flowed from Śiva's left eye, he first marked the spot by placing the big toe of his sandaled foot on the eye.

"Just as Kannappa was about to remove his left eye, Kāma Killer appeared before him and applauded him by clapping his hands. No sooner did Śiva look at Kannappa than his eye returned to its socket. It all happened so fast that it was hard to tell whether Śiva had given Kannappa his own eye or whether he had returned the eye he had just received from Kannappa. Meanwhile, the tears stopped flowing from Śiva's left eye.

"As if Kannappadeva's eyes were actually Śiva's, they began to shed tears of pleasure. As if they were mingling with the tears that came to his own eyes when he watched the three cities burn, tears of compassion rolled down from Hara's eyes. It is no wonder that Kannappa was ecstatic.

"The gods and demons bowed down and sought refuge. The sages came with hands clasped above their heads and praised him. As Śiva's drums rolled, a downpour of flowers fell on the earth to the elation of the pramathas.

"When the sage who had been angrily lying in wait saw Kannappa's pure innocence, his sterling character, his wealth of devotion, and how Śiva appeared before him, he was beside himself with excitement. He fell prostrate at Kannappa's feet and said, 'I did not know your innocence. I meant to harm you. O Kannappa, forgive my fault. You are the compassionate one! What else is there to say? You yourself are Śiva. Where else can one find such innocence, such courage, and such power? Have we ever heard of such a thing from all the Vedas and śāstras? Or has it ever been seen in the three worlds? Hurray for Kannappa! He is the supreme liṅga. Hurray for Kannappa! He is the home of the pramathas. Hurray for Kannappa! He dwells innocently in the liṅga. Hurray for Kannappa! He is Nalla Nāyanāru!'[95] And the noble ascetic praised his high devotion.

"Lady Uma was surprised to see how affectionately Kannappa and Śiva looked at each other. They actually looked like equals. They were equally beautiful as they looked into each other's eyes. And they seemed to have become one with each other. Kannappa's eyes and Black Throat's eyes looked like twins. It was not clear whether Śiva's eyes were mirror images of Kannappa's or whether Kannappa's eyes were reflections of Śiva's. Could Śiva's eyes be extensions of Kannappa's eyes? Or could Kannappa's eyes be the hidden sprouts of Śiva's eyes? Maybe Śiva's eyes were the seeds of Kannappa's eyes? Could Kannappa's eyes be the fruit of Moon Wearer? It really seemed as if Kannappa's eyes had become Kāma Killer's eyes. And it also seemed as if Śiva's eyes had become Kannappa's eyes. It was equally valid to say that all four eyes belonged to Kannappa or all four eyes belonged to Īśvara. Under Mṛḍa's third eye both pairs of eyes shone with equal brilliance. Subject, object, and act of perception, all three became one. Both Kannappa and Śiva felt as if they were looking at their very own eyes. And the brilliance of the four eyes dimmed the eye on Śiva's forehead.

" 'If there had been another three cities, would they have been burned up by the sight of that eye? If Lakṣmi's son[96] had acquired another body, would he have been burned under that gaze? If Yama had gone astray again, would that eye have burned him up? At the end of the age, could any world be destroyed by the sight of that eye? If Śiva had gotten Kannappa's compassionate eyes earlier, would he have come to be known as Fierce Eyes? If he had acquired Kannappa's eyes earlier, would he have asked to eat Siriyāla's feast? If he had had Kannappa's eyes earlier, would he have consented to the killing of a fetus?[97] If Īśa had had these beautiful lotus eyes before, could he have stood back and watched the death of Nimmavva's son?[98] With ambrosial eyes like these, how could he have looked at Nambi so that his eyes were destroyed?[99] With eyes like these, how could he have watched a child walk on a snake hill? But why go on like this? With eyes like these he would have been known for his great compassion. If Īśa had had these eyes, he would have been recognized as the most beautiful man in the world. If he had always had such eyes, would any woman have been beautiful enough for Hara?' wondered the people.

"Īśa was greatly enriched by Kannappa's eyes. At the touch of Kannappa's sandals, Śiva became affectionate toward the devotees. When he was struck by the sandal, the moon gained everybody's respect. When Gaṅga was hit by the sandal, she became the sacred river for the whole universe. If Brahma could have become that sandal, he could have reached Īśa's head. The sacred sandal belonged to a devotee of that same Mahādeva whom Viṣṇu was unable to see. The sandal is the great ornament of the head of the liṅga, the head that could not be seen by Brahma.[100]

"What else is there to say? The power of Kannappa's sandal was truly remarkable. Moon Wearer became popular when he was touched by the water from Kannappa's feet. The one who destroyed Rati's husband[101] had his body purified by Kannappa's leftovers. Because he drank Kannappa's gargle water, the destroyer of the three demon cities became superior to the whole universe. By eating Kannappa's prasāda, Pārvati's husband gained immortality. By eating that prasāda, the god surpassed the knowledge of the Vedas and śāstras. By eating food that was polluted by Kannappa's saliva, Śiva transcended all taboos. Because the liṅga was polluted by Kannappa's saliva, his entire body gained the same status as his head.[102]

" 'It was through Gaṇanātha[103] that Śiva acquired the liṅga form. It was through Nambi that he became devoted. Now it is through our Kannappa that his body has become sacred,' said the people in praise of Śiva.

"To everyone's amazement, Pārvati's husband embraced Kannappadeva and offered to give him the fruits of the fourfold activity.[104]

"But Kannappa only smiled, bowed down with hands folded, and said, 'I don't know the meaning of liberation. There is nothing that I desire. In fact, I don't even know how to ask for anything. I know you and only you. There is nothing that I desire and nothing that I lack. Your body is the divine, primal, erect liṅga, O God. Great soul, there are only two things that I want, to have your compassionate glance planted in me so that it can grow like a vine, and to have my tender, loving glance planted in your glance where it can grow. That is all that I ask. I want no other boon.'

"As Kannappa spoke, the granter of all desires stood before him, and the two of them were filled with bliss as they looked at each other. Even today Kannappadeva and Gauri's husband still stand and look at each other in the city of Tirukāḷatti.[105] Even today in that city, Three Eyes is anointed with the water that has first washed Kannappa's mouth. Even today[106] Kannappa's leftover food is used for the worship of Śiva. Mṛḍa still never eats anything unless it has first been offered to Kannappa. It is because he gave his *kannu* (eye) that people know him as Kannappa. Even today Kannappa stands there to the great amazement of Śiva. From the beginning, God has always bestowed his grace on those whose hearts are innocent."

Cĕnnabasava listened as Basava narrated the stories of the innocents. "Because you have told about these innocents, their stories have become known," said the assembly of devotees who had greatly enjoyed the stories as he told them one after the other. Then Basava bowed down to them as he continued with another story of a devotee of old.

The Story of Kaḷiyamba Nāyanāru

"There was a man named Kaḷiyamba Nāyanāru who had vowed to make you laugh, and who had thereby gained Śiva's appreciation. If you would laugh only once, it would be enough to save me," said Basava. And he made the devotees laugh even more as they floated on the ambrosial ocean of pleasure.

The Story of Sakaleśvaru Mādirājayya

He was the chief among the elders. He was first among the rivals. He was well endowed with good sense. He was a pathway to wisdom. He was a good speaker. He had a loving heart. He was pure-minded. He had many outstanding qualities. He was an expert vīṇa player. He was a master of the science of music. He knew the essence of the Vedas and the Vedānta. He had destroyed the evils of worldly life. He followed the principles for the control of the passions. He engaged in regular religious observances. He was tranquil and austere. His fame extended throughout space. He was compassionate. He had banished grief. He was supreme among all human beings. His name was Sakaleśvaru Mādirājayya. Let me tell you about the amazing power of his devotion.

He ruled the earth with the city of Nambe as his capital. In his rule he exhibited the perfect qualities of a king: physical strength, beauty, ability as a donor, wisdom, and administrative skill. He accepted the devotion of jaṅgamas who were associated with the liṅga, and he worshiped them in return. Furthermore, he always worshiped them as befitted a king, and at the appropriate time. He regularly worshiped God Śiva in a garden in which all different kinds of leaves and flowers grew.

He played[107] all the various kinds of vīṇas that were most appropriate for the different *rāgas*, beginning with the thirty-two. And he always used whatever vīṇa Śiva favored for a particular rāga: *rāvaṇahastaṁ*, *brahmavīṇa*, *lāvaṇyavīṇa*, *kailāsavīṇa*, *ākāśavīṇa*, *pinākivīṇa*, *sāraṅgavīṇa*, *kūrmavīṇa*, *svāyambhuvīṇa*, *gaurivīṇa*, *kinnaravīṇa*, and *janaka*.

From among these he would select a vīṇa and tune it. First he tuned the *mogacāḷamu* and the *navarāṇa*. Then he tuned the *savathāṇamu*, the *tāḷapaṭṭiya*, the *kattari*, the *coḷavaṇi*, and the *sāraṇa*. As he did so, he sang, 'Lord of all! Eternally auspicious! Listen to me! Lord of my life! Lord of music!' as he prepared to play the sacred prelude to the rāga. Playing with a pure mind, he produced the seven notes, and they, in turn, produced the prelude in a well-modulated manner. Using the *ārāṭakāvuḷamu* and *caudaḷamu* sounds, he combined the seven deep, natural tones in a brilliant performance. He used the low, middle, and high pitches in it and counted the beats. He also displayed pure sounds and harmony. He used both regional and classical forms. He used fast, medium fast, and slow beats to play the same notes. He combined the primary elements into meters in a balanced way. He used *vaiḷamu*, *tāḷamu*, *sāḷi*, *peḷḷāpĕḷḷi*, *jāyanujāyi*, *ucitamu*, *ŏyyāramu*, *panjaḷamu*, *khacaramu*, *viṣamamu*, *grahamokṣaṇamu*, *bhajavaṇi*, *ravaṇi*, *bharaṇi*, *miṭhāyi*, *nijavaṇi*, *nivaḷamu*, *nicayavaidhasamu*, *nigiti*, *sudhāyi*, *sannigitamu*, the mixed *grahatritayamu*, *amsukalalita*, *gāḍhamu*, *rāgakāku*, *boccagādhamu*, *deśikāku*, *sindhu*, *karuṇakāku*, *nakhakartari*, *haḷuvāyi*, *dharaharasamavāyi*, *guṇḍāguṇḍi*, *bhramaralīla*, *guruḍi*, *moḍāmoḍi*, *pŏriravāḷamu*, *tikkhāyihŏyalu*, *rikkhilaviḷagu*, *cŏkkhāyi*, and the rest of the long *ṭhāyas*.[108]

He played both masculine and feminine rāgas: *deśākṣi*, *dhannāsi*, *deśi*, *malahari*, *sakalarāmakriya*, *lalita*, *sāḷaṇga*, *nāṭa*, *gujjari*, *megharañji*, *veḷāvuḷi*, *citraveḷāvuḷi*, *māḷavi*, *siri*, *varāḷi*, *kāmbhoji*, the five *gauḷas*, *baṅgāḷampugurija*, the two *bhairavis*, *baḍapañjaramu*, *māraṅga*, *guṇḍakriya*, *kauśika*, *devakriya*, *madhyamāvati*, *toḍi*, and *āvasatamu*. As he played them, he sang songs illustrating the principles of music and rendering texts with new musical depth.

He also danced when all the instruments were playing. And he pleased the assembled devotees by bowing to them. Day and night he bathed in the ambrosial ocean of service to the liṅga, but he was not overcome by all the comforts of the empire of devotion.

Similarly, there was a great king named Mallarasu who had abdicated his kingdom and gone to Śrīśailam. There he entered into a deep meditation in the middle of a bilva forest on the mountain. From the devotees, Mādirājayya heard about his devotion, the riches of his meditation, and the perfection of his experience in the spirit of devotion to Śiva. So he went to Śrīśailam possessed of a great desire to see Mallarasu.

Mādirājayya visited[109] the summits of the mountain, the peaks of the quartz mountains, the gold and gem bearing mountains, the caves, the pinnacles that touched the sky, the noble cities that were hidden beneath the earth, the mountains of gems, and all-giving diamonds, the places that gave liberation on sight, the dens of birds, animals, snakes, and mixed breeds, the great parks, and the areas where waterfalls fell from the mountains. In each of these solitary places he worshiped the liṅga.

When he had gone on for a long time, he at last arrived in the vicinity of the bilva forest where there were rudrākṣa mountains, rudrākṣa trees, rudrākṣa mines, rudrākṣa rivers; ash mountains, ash trees, ash mines, ash rivers; liṅga mountains, liṅga trees, liṅga mines, liṅga holy water; jaṅgama mountains, jaṅgama trees, jaṅgama bushes, jaṅgama vines; talking mountains, talking trees, talking bushes, talking vines; singing mountains, singing trees, singing bushes, singing vines, singing animals, singing bees, singing birds, singing serpents; dancing mountains, dancing trees, dancing bushes, dancing vines, dancing animals, dancing birds, dancing snakes, dancing monkeys; wood torches, grass torches, sand torches, river torches; water mountains, water trees, water birds, water animals; trees of many colors, stones of many colors, bushes of many colors, vines of many colors; trees of many shapes, stones of many shapes, bushes of many shapes, vines of many shapes; khecara trees, khecara mountains, khecara bushes, khecara vines; mountain palaces, tree palaces, bush palaces, vine palaces; animal-shaped trees, animal-shaped stones, animal-shaped bushes, animal-shaped vines; bird-shaped trees, bird-shaped stones, bird-shaped bushes, bird-shaped vines; human-shaped trees, human-shaped stones, human-shaped bushes, human-shaped vines; god-shaped trees, god-shaped stones, god-shaped bushes, god-shaped vines; trees that are born, trees that are giving birth; stones that are born, stones that are giving birth; gandharva trees, gandharva rocks, gandharva bushes, gandharva vines; eternal mountains with shadows that did not move around; eternal trees with shadows that did not move around; nearby mountains without shadows; nearby trees without shadows; mountains with shadows at a distance; trees with shadows at a distance; mountains that looked different at different times of day; trees that looked different at different times of day; trees and mountains that had intercourse and immediately gave birth to baby mountains; trees and mountains that had intercourse and immediately gave birth to baby trees; princely trees that were on the tops of other trees and worshiped by them; mountains that a person could climb and thereon view the fourteen worlds; trees that a person could climb and thereon view all fourteen worlds; mountains from which a person could swing anywhere; mountains that a person could climb and get any form he thought of; trees that a person could climb and get any shape he thought of; half trees and half mountains; half animals and half birds; mountains that looked like fruit-bearing trees; trees that had grown up to look like hills; clock trees, which dropped a fruit every hour;[110] clock mountains, which resounded every hour; trees that made themselves whole when they were cut off at the roots; vines that made themselves whole when they were cut off at the roots; rocks that came back when they were thrown away; mountains that rose and set with the sun; mountains with four gorges like four doorways that afforded views of cities; mountains as powerful as the mountain of Śrīśailam; trees with four branches, which, when climbed, afforded views of cities; trees as powerful as the trees of Śrīśailam; Gaṅga mountains that, when climbed, gave one a bath in the Pātāḷagaṅga;[111] Gaṅga trees, which, when climbed, gave one a bath in the Pātāḷagaṅga; sixty-eight mountains that, when climbed, showed a person to the sixty-eight sacred bathing places; sixty-eight trees that, when climbed, showed a person to the sixty-eight sacred bathing places; mountains that produced fire by rubbing themselves together and bursting into flame; trees that produced fire by rubbing themselves together and bursting into flame; milk mountains, milk trees, milk ponds, milk lakes; curd mountains, curd trees, curd ponds, curd lakes; butter mountains, butter trees, butter ponds, butter lakes; ambrosia mountains, ambrosia trees, ambrosia ponds, ambrosia lakes; mercury mountains, mercury trees, mercury ponds, mercury lakes; gold mountains, gold trees, gold ponds, gold lakes; gold animals, gold snakes, gold bees, gold birds, gold bushes, gold vines, gold dust, gold sand, gold cities, gold mansions, gold forts, gold temples; gem mountains, gem trees, gem bushes, gem vines; jewel mountains, jewel trees, jewel bushes, jewel vines; trees that had one branch of aśoka, one branch of surabhi, one branch of banyan, one branch of tamarind, one branch of *kuravaṅka*, one branch of *kramuka*, one branch of camphor, one branch of sugar cane, one branch of sandalwood, one branch of *tilaka*, one branch of *campaka*, one branch of *krovi*, one branch of *mandāra*, one branch of *vakuḷa*, one branch of *māreḍu*, one branch of *pŏnna*; trees that had one flower of *viravādi*, one flower of jasmine, one flower of chrysanthemum, one flower of hemp, one flower of oleander, one flower of waterlily, one flower of lotus, one flower of *mŏlla*, one flower of henna, one flower of *jāji*, one flower of red waterlily, one flower of *mŏgali*; trees that bore one mango, one lemon, one orange, one banana, one *neredu* fruit, one wood apple, one marshy date, one date, one pomegranate, one *movi*, one *gaṅgaregu*, and one jackfruit. There were many kinds of trees, but they all sprang from one root.

"There were mountains and trees that were all of different colors. On one side they were white; on one side they were yellow; on one side they were copper-colored; on one side they were blood red; on one side they were gray; on one side they were blue.

"There were all kinds of vines that sprang from the same root: coral, grape, *dāradavalli*, and betel.

"There was a breeze that kept the courtyard of the liṅgas swept clean. There were gentle showers that washed clean the houses of the liṅgas. There were crops of grain that came and made designs around the liṅgas. There were holy waters that came and bathed the liṅgas. There were sandalwood trees that smeared sandalwood paste onto the liṅgas. There were flower gardens that came and worshiped the liṅgas three times a day. There were *guggulu* trees that constantly gave offerings of incense to the various liṅgas. There were grass torches and wood torches that made flame offerings to the liṅgas. There were many kinds of trees that constantly worshiped the liṅgas with their fruit. There were betel nut trees that offered betel to the liṅgas.

"Each of them used their own names in the worship along with the name of Īśvara.

"The trees said, 'Lord of trees, grant us refuge. And they worshiped tree liṅgas in tree temples.

"The mountains said, 'Lord of mountains, grant us refuge.' And they worshiped mountain liṅgas in mountain caves.

"The animals said, 'Lord of animals, grant us refuge.' And they worshiped animal liṅgas in the lairs of animals.

"The birds said, 'Lord of birds, grant us refuge.' And they worshiped bird liṅgas in bird nests.

"The serpents said, 'Lord of serpents, grant us refuge.' And they worshiped serpent liṅgas in serpent holes.

"The bees said, 'Lord of bees, grant us refuge.' And they worshiped bee liṅgas in bee hives.

"The ponds said, 'Lord of water, grant us refuge.' And they worshiped water liṅgas in ponds.

"The holy waters said, 'Lord of holy waters, grant us refuge.' And they worshiped holy water liṅgas in holy water temples.

"The sages said, 'Lord of sages, grant us refuge.' And they worshiped sage liṅgas in the villages of sages.

"The hill tribesmen said, 'Lord of the hill tribes, grant us refuge.' And they worshiped hill tribe liṅgas in hill tribe houses.

"There were ascetics who performed incomparably terrible austerities. There were good sages who looked like mountains because they had anthills growing over them. There were good sages who looked like trees because they had trees growing over them. There were good sages who looked like black mountains because their unkempt hair grew so long. There were sages who performed penances by raising their feet above their heads. There were sages who performed penances by standing on the great toe of one foot. There were sages who performed penances by sitting in the middle of five fires or by standing in water up to their chins. There were good sages who ate water, leaves, sand, air, roots, fruit, and rocks. There were good sages who ate handouts from trees and gained indestructible bodies. There were good sages who ate handouts from mountains and lived lives of bliss.

"There were gandharva couples who played in the water and the forests. There were gods who came to worship self-born liṅgas. There were water maidens and cave maidens, and water youths and cave youths. There were herds of elephants, human animals, griffins, tigers, and other kinds of animals. There were rhinoceroses, double-headed eagles, fearsome snakes, and peacocks. All of these forgot their mutual enmity and played with one another.

"When Mādirājayya came praising the power of the bilva forest and looking for him, Mallarasu[112] decided to test what was in the mind of the sinless man. So he took on an infinitely large body and blocked Mādirājayya's path.

"When Mādirājayya saw this prone form that filled the earth and the sky, he thought, 'Is this a great yogi? Or is it a mountain of ashes? Can it be a fallen rudrākṣa tree? Maybe it is a purifying lamp. Or maybe it is a form of Śambhu. Or is it the ocean of consciousness that has taken a form? What am I to do now? It doesn't look like I can go either way.'

"Surprised, Mādayya[113] decided to try to find a way. So he set out toward the head and walked for three years. But he was not able to find it. He then decided that he was wrong for having gone first to the head and that he should have gone first and fallen at the feet. So he started from where he was and walked toward the feet.

"When he had walked in that direction for eight years, he became very frightened. 'What can I do if you don't reveal yourself? Why do you put me to so much trouble? Am I capable of knowing you, O form of bliss? Show me your feet and protect me,' he prayed and folded his hands over his head as he fell prostrate.

"When he saw this, Mallarasu smiled at him and resumed his original form. 'I only wanted to find out what was on your mind,' he said. And he asked Mādayya to get up while he extended his hand to him to help him. Then he embraced him and said, 'What a courageous man you are! How did you manage to get here to see me?' He then took him to his house and performed the liṅga rituals. After that he gave him prasāda and floated him on the ambrosial ocean of the incomparable essence of Śiva. And he had him stay there with him for a while.

"'You must remain on the earth, deluded by activity, for a little while longer,' commanded Mallarasu, the guru.

"'How can I leave you now? When a poor man finally finds a treasure, is he going to reject it and go back to working for wages? I have found your lotus feet, and I have reached my goal. How can I go back now?' said Mādirājayya.

"With a gentle smile, Mallarasu acknowledged the truth of what Mādirājayya said. But he decided to make him consent to going back by showing him visible proof that he could believe in. So, he made a *tumma* tree and told Mādirājayya to sit under it and to meditate steadfastly.

"Then Mallarasu disguised himself as a herdsman[114] with thick fingers, calloused feet, stumpy thighs, flap ears, skinny torso, distended veins, stub nose, knotted brows, pot belly, sunken cheeks, sunken chest, long neck, reddish moustache, bug eyes, cat whiskers, black body, yellow teeth, skinny arms, puny legs, and a sunken back. He had a knife for removing thorns, a noose, a blanket, a branding iron, and a pouch tied at his waist. He wore his long truss tied up at his waist. His long, disheveled hair blew in the wind. He whistled. He looked around angrily. He called his dogs. He stretched his back. He stood on one leg. He carried an ax, a crook, a lunch pot, and a cudgel. He had some kids under his arms. And he shadowboxed as he went along.

"He had goats with him, and he proceeded to knock down tumma fruit for them. In the process of doing so, he climbed up to a branch that was directly over Mādirājayya and got ready to cut it down.

"'What do you think you are doing, you crude shepherd? Why do you have to cut off a branch that is right over my head? Aren't there any other trees in this forest that you can cut down without hacking off this one branch that is shading me? It looks as if you have forgotten who you are! How can you have the gall to do such a thing? How do you think you are going to escape my wrath? I'm of a mind to give you a good beating, you worthless shepherd,' shouted Mādirājayya.

"At this, the herdsman laughed aloud, 'Alas, O liberated soul! Alas, O ascetic! Alas, you are far too angry! The real sinner is the one who gets angry. How can you call me a sinner? Won't the noble lake of the mind get disturbed by angry sparks? Won't the flow of honey from the lotus heart be dried up by the flames of anger? Won't the lotus of truth, consciousness, and bliss be wilted by the heat of anger? Is this dullness the result of learning or contemplation, or is it the result of meditation? What do you have to say for yourself? Aren't there any other trees in this forest for you to sit under? Such equanimity! You must be the greatest sage of all!

"Actually, the way you're acting reminds me of the story of the bear that was floating along in a flood. A man spotted it and thought it was a blanket, so he swam out to get it. But instead the bear caught him. Meanwhile, a man on the bank yelled to him to let go of it.

"To this the first man replied, 'I let go of him long ago, but he won't let go of me.'

"Similarly, even when you let go of *māya*, it does not necessarily let go of you.

" 'You're like the foolish woman who carefully pulled up her sari before leaping into the fire.[115]

" 'You're like the fool who renounced the world, but was careful to entrust his house to a caretaker.

" 'You're like the cowardly fellow who jumped into a well and then looked for something to use for a lifesaver.

" 'You're like the ascetic who wisely got rid of all his attachments and then looked for a place of shelter.

" 'You're like the lunatic who claimed to be cured and then asked for a pestle to wrap around his head as a turban.

" 'But why should I keep giving examples? In a sugar-cane-eating contest, a contestant is defeated if only one fiber remains uneaten.

" 'Once a person has acknowledged his disgust for the world, the slightest desire for worldly attachments is a defect.'

"Then Mallarasu resumed his original form and stood before Mādirājayya. And Mādirājayya closed his eyes, bowed down his head in shame, and began to weep. 'What do I know of devotion? What do I know of liberation? No matter what I do, I cannot seem to get rid of māya. As long as I am still concerned with mind, action, and results, how can I expect to get rid of māya? How can I get the grace of Śiva when I am still led around by my senses? If a fruit is plucked when it is still immature, it will never ripen. How can I gain eternal fame and steadfast devotion, except through the grace of Śiva? Alas, when a man is involved in action as I am, is it ever possible to become indifferent to it all?'

"When Mādirājayya had spoken these words, Mallarasu embraced him and said, 'You have set your karma at a distance. Don't be sad anymore. If a person were still involved with karma, how could he even get to us? I have produced all this simply because there is still a good reason for you to go back down to the earth. Listen, and I'll tell you why. By order of Mahādeva, a devotee named Basava went to the earth to further the cause of devotion. You are to join him on the earth, and you are to enjoy the pleasure of his companionship in the good Śaiva tradition.

" 'Six hundred and fifty years passed before you came here, O best of sages. Now you have to stay there just fifty years more. After that I promise to bring you back to me. A total of seven hundred years has to go by before you can come here to stay. That wish cannot be granted right now. But ask me for whatever else you want, and I will give it to you.'

"Then Mādirājayya folded his hands before Mallarasu and said, 'What shall I ask for? Riches are as fickle as a mistress. Longevity is the very birthplace of māya. Heaven itself is impermanent. Only liberation is worth asking for. But liberation is the same as being at Bharga's feet, and I cannot be there for fifty years more. You yourself know that there is nothing else that I want, Lord! You know everything! You are the lord of all.'"

When Mādirājayya had fallen prostrate before him and stood up again, Mallarasu had compassion on him and instantly set him down before Basava in Kaḷyāṇa. Meanwhile, Basava had just fallen prostrate before Saṅgameśvara. And when he stood up, to his surprise, there was Mādirājayya before him.

Enjoying himself immensely, Mādirājayya affectionately floated Basava on the ambrosial ocean of the eternal bliss of the liṅga. And he accepted Basava's worship.

Whosoever disseminates, hears, or copies the story of Mādirājayya, who is the lord of all three worlds, will get all the good benefits of devotion.

You are the gem of minds! You are the all-giving diamond of men! You are the crest jewel of wisdom! You are the protector of dharma! You grant bliss to the śaraṇas! You walk the good path! Your mind is permanently decorated with grace! Your spotless fame is known throughout space! Your mind is associated with pure devotion! You are free from the six bad qualities! You are wise! You always pay close attention to great truths! You enjoy the comfort of knowledge that is graciously given! Your heart is full of joy! You are called Saṅga! You have destroyed the sins that originate in the senses!

This is the work of the good poet and fortunate soul Pālkuriki Somanātha, who enjoys the fragrance of the lotus feet of the innumerable māheśvaras and who is immersed in the ambrosial ocean of pleasure that is derived from the blessings of the jaṅgama liṅga. It has benefited greatly from the poetic spirit graciously bestowed by Karasthali Viśvanātha.

This is the third chapter of the story that is known as the *Basava Purāṇa*.

CHAPTER IV

Blessed guru liṅga! Firmly compassionate eyes! Liberated soul! Supreme devotee! Saṅga!

The Story of Maḍivālu Mācayya[1]

And then there was a man called Maḍivālu Mācayya. He faultlessly performed the heroic vows. He was the best of men. He was supreme among the jaṅgamas. He spoke the truth bluntly. His senses were firmly in control. He was one with the liṅga. His fame was firmly established. He avoided associating with bhavis. He was an ocean of the bliss of experience of the pure essence. He observed the vow of keeping his promises. He conquered the six enemies.[2] He brightened his surroundings. He was a visible manifestation of Rudra in the washerman caste. He was free from old age and death. He was not born out of a womb. He was indestructible. He was a bee on the lotus feet of the śaraṇas. He was from the town of Hipparigĕ.[3] The ocean of his great devotion to Basava engulfed all the corners of the universe. And he was filled with the bliss of the liṅga.

He came with a desire to see the jaṅgamas and received devoted worship from Basava. He worshiped incomparable jaṅgamas and performed servile tasks for them without shirking. He said that by doing so he relieved himself of the itch of his hands.

True to his word, he picked up the soiled garments from the whole assembly of devotees. Then he went early in the morning and arranged for a separate place to wash them. When he finished washing the clothes, he tied them up in bundles, and with a weapon in his hand, he devotedly carried them along like the silver mountain.[4] As he went through the streets, he rang a bell and announced, "Beware! If any bhavi so much as touches the clothes of the śaraṇas, I will kill him!"

When he arrived at the monastery, he pressed the clean clothing to soften it. Then, when the jaṅgamas came and asked for clothing, he bowed and gave them whatever they wanted.[5] Later, when the people who had originally given him the garments came and asked, he relied on the bountifulness of the liṅga and also returned their clothes to them.

When Basava repeatedly heard about what the washerman was doing, he was surprised and praised him, saying, "We have often heard of washermen who devotedly wash clothes for devotees. Not only that, there was once another washerman, named Ekāki, who talked pure devotion, but we have never heard of such steadfast devotion, such power, and such efficacy." And he praised Mācayya without ceasing.

Now it happened one day that someone chanced to touch the clothing, and Mācayya killed him outright.

The People Tell the King That Mācayya Killed a Man on the Street

Then the people rose up and went to the king's court, bowed down before him, and said, "O King, listen. There is an insolent washerman in your city who claims to be a devotee. He wears a sword in his waistband, and he refuses to give way to anyone. Even the strongest have to stand aside for him. He constantly threatens, saying, 'If anyone touches this bundle of clothes, I will kill him.'

"With such threats he brings shopping to a halt, and prevents business transactions from taking place. People cannot even walk around together. If he sees anyone on the city streets, he drives them away. Amazingly enough, even cattle, horses, elephants, and vehicles are afraid to approach him. This may seem like a story to you, but when they spot him at a distance, they flee. Now, today, a total stranger who had never even heard of all this went to the market. When he happened to touch the bundle of clothes, Mācayya stabbed him and threw him into the air. The body is nowhere to be found! He may have swallowed it, or it may be in the sky. Listen, O King! We do not know what might have taken place after that, for we came straight here to report to you."

When he heard this, the king was very agitated, and he looked angrily at Basava and said, "What is the meaning of this? Can anyone survive in the hands of your devotees? A washerman, a simple washer of clothes, has become a menace. And he has created an uproar among the people of this city. Why should a washerman be so arrogant? And why should he bully people and keep them at a distance? This is incredible! I have never heard of such a thing! Tell me, are clothes going to be ruined by being touched? Even the natives of this city cannot walk about safely; how can foreigners come to our town? What kind of a mighty man is this? When a stranger came to the marketplace, he killed him. Now even his corpse is nowhere to be found. Do bodies disappear in the sky? This washerman swallows people like a demon! No one abused him. No one even spoke to him. The man only touched the bundle of clothes. Is it right to kill a visitor to the city like that? He has no sense of justice in the way he murders people. Claiming that he is a devotee, he goes around slaying all the citizens of my town."

With the consent of his priests, the king called his guards and ordered them to kill the washerman on the spot unless he coughed up the man whom he had swallowed.

Basava Tells the King of the Efficacy of Maḍivālu Mācayya

When the king had spoken, Basava replied, "Listen, you don't have any idea what is going to happen next! You just talk! When ignorant people caw like crows and say 'Cāki! Cāki!'[6] you allow yourself to get all excited.

"Do you think that this man is really a washerman? Well, he's not! He is a manifest liṅga. What else do you think he is? He was born in a caste, but he is above caste. He does not have a caste, but he belongs to all castes. He is nothing less than an incarnation of Black Neck. Therefore, he is omnipresent. If you wonder how that can be, I will tell you. He is the brahmin who begged Lotus Born for his hair and got it for his sacred thread. He is the *kṣatriya* who rules like a conqueror over the great empire of liberation. He is the *vaiśya* who guides the vessel of karma caused by evil births through the ocean of the cycle of birth and death. He is the *śūdra* who never tires of harvesting the fruit of good deeds. He is the original potter who employed the primal *śakti*[7] as the material cause and the *nāda* and *bindu*[8] as the efficient causes in throwing the pots that are the cosmic egg and all the rest. He is the fisherman who uses Hari's backbone as his rod, the king of serpents as his line, the man-lion avatār's claw as his hook, the boar avatār who carried the earth as his bait, and the turtle and fish avatārs as his barbs. And he dips them all in the water for his own pleasure. He is the woodworker who uses all the living beings who revolve in the cycle of birth and death as the wheel of his lathe. And he drives it by using karma as the axle. He is the blacksmith who heats the metal of life in the fire of knowledge and sharpens it. He is the goldsmith who tests what is given to him on a touchstone and throws away impure metals. He is the hunter who decapitated Brahma when he was engaged in intercourse in the guise of a deer.[9] He is the herdsman who rules over all the animals, beginning with the horses and including the insects and the worms. He is the puppeteer who, by pulling the threads in the unreal drama, determines what is real and what is simply its manifestation. He is the *boya*[10] who destroys the cardinal mountains, sprinkles the waters of the ocean about, and cultivates the land. He is the washerman who cleans up at the time of the deluge without any regard for Brahma or Viṣṇu. It is simply because he washes the clothing of the great assembly of devotees that he is called Maḍivālu Mācayya. Being everything as he is, is it right for you to refer to him by the name of a caste?

"He has incarnated for a purpose. Both his character and his behavior are quite remarkable. Let me tell you about them. He washes only the garments of those who are devoted to the god who wears the skins of the man-lion,[11] tiger, and elephant demons. And he does not let anyone else touch them! He returns the devotees' garments to the devotees. When a jaṅgama asks for clothes, he arranges to give him whatever he asks for. Then—glowing with the wealth of the liṅga—when the people who originally gave him the clothes ask for them, he returns their own garments to each of them. His abilities are beyond the comprehension of men with twisted souls. Don't take this personally. This devotee will kill a man for so much as touching his clothes; what do you think he will do to you if you go out there and attack him? Do you think you can set things straight simply by pointing your finger? I warn you, don't try anything like that!"

When Basava had spoken, the king became very angry. "Don't give me your explanations and don't tell me any stories! Just stay here while I take care of things," he said.

Ordering Basava to stay back, that sinner of a king looked at his guards and said, "Don't step aside for him. Stand in the road when he approaches and warn him to stop. Then turn a rutting elephant loose on him and let it kill him."

When they heard this, the people were elated. The mahouts went out and blocked his path and turned loose a rutting elephant.

Maḍivālu Mācayya Kills the Elephant

When Mācayya saw them at a distance, he gave a mighty cry, a loud roar, and said, "Am I, Śiva's royal elephant, going to be frightened by a beastly elephant that belongs to a mere human? Stand back so that you don't get killed!"

When he touched his bell with its clapper,[12] the strength went out of the elephant. But even then the mahouts charged forward. As they came closer and closer, he took the bundle of clothes off his back and deposited it in the sky. He put the bell he carried in his hand in the same place. Then he drew up his body, clapped his hands by way of challenge, marched forward, and looked around. When he had slain the entire troop of mighty mahouts, he grabbed the elephant's trunk and twisted it. He threw the beast down, tore it to pieces, and killed it, just as Vīrabhadra cast down the man-lion avatār.[13] Again and again he threw it down, now with his left hand and now with his right. With a roar he tore it to pieces just as Hara tore apart the elephant demon. Just as Rudra broke Viṣṇu's backbone, he angrily threw away the body so that there was no meat for the *māla* who picked up the bones and no hide for the *gŏḍāri*.[14]

Because he had promised never to give way to anyone who got in his way, that personification of heroism, to the delight of the devotees, killed a rutting elephant on the street.

Then he said, "Whoever the king was who sent that elephant against me, I am going to destroy his insolence."

When Bijjala heard what had happened, he bent his head low and looked at Basava.

Basava Tells Bijjala of the Power of the Śiva Devotees

Joyfully the minister, Basava, said to the king, "I kept trying to prevent you from doing this, but you would not listen. Instead, you obstinately heeded the words of the people and dispatched your guards. Now you have lost your elephant, and you have also lost your self-respect. Your balance is upset. And, furthermore, you have committed the sin of treason against Śiva."

The Story of Iruvadāṇḍāri[15]

"Listen, O Lord of the Earth! Once in the Drāviḍa country, in the realm of the Coḍa king of Karayūru, there was among the sixty-three devotees a man named Iruvattu. He avoided all worldly associations. He was famed for his physical prowess. He was called courageous. He warred against those who did wrong to Śiva. He was an incarnation of Vīrabhadra in battle. He had no interest in the crafts of the ordinary people of the world. His mind was straight. His fame was wonderful.

He was courageous and learned in all the śāstras. He observed the Śaiva rituals. Early in his youth his mind had become filled with true devotion, and he had conquered fear and illusion. According to the dictates of śruti and smṛti, he wore sacred ashes and the rudrākṣa on his body. The act of serving the lotus feet of the devotees absorbed him. He vowed to slay without mercy any sinners who harmed the Śaiva devotees; this vow was as dear to him as his own life.[16] He was a scholar in the *Śiva Purāṇa*, which was uttered by the pramathas.

"The elephant of the mighty Coḍa king was in a frenzy. The rut was in flood. It ran amok.

"As it raged through the streets, a devotee rose up in the last watch of the night. Not wanting to let the dawn beat him, he hurriedly entered into a fine flower garden. There he rejected the flowers whose petals had been torn in a gale, the buds that had bloomed prematurely in the east wind, the flowers that were torn off their stems in a whirlwind, those that were wilted because they were hidden by branches or because they clung to the tips, and those that had lost their fragrance because of too many insects. He left all those behind and filled his basket with fresh, fragrant, full blossoms.

"Transported by the excitement of going to worship Hara, the devotee and his basket ran into the elephant. As they met on the path, the elephant grabbed him with its trunk, swung him around, and slashed him with its tusks so that his head was cut off.

"As his life breath left him the devotee said, 'Lord of my life! Śiva, Śiva! Supreme soul!'

"When the cries reached Iruvadāṇḍāri, he recognized them as the words of a Malahara[17] devotee. He was surprised and angered. 'What is the meaning of this cry of distress?' he thought. Quickly he went and beheld the fury of the mighty elephant and the distress of the devotee.

"With his hand on his sharp sword, he cried, 'You brute! I am about to kill you. Stay where you are!' When he attacked, the elephant countered with all its strength, just as the elephant demon attacked Īśvara.

"Infuriated by the attack, the man cried out and drew himself up. Looking like Rudra the killer, he quaked with anger. He roared like a lion. He ordered the onlookers to stand at a distance and not to panic. Promising to kill the mad elephant, he approached, grabbed its trunk, and yanked it down. As it fell, he laid hold of the mahout and killed him, too. Dragging the beast to the earth with its left leg, he placed one foot on its neck. With a mighty cry, he drove his sword into the crown of the elephant's head and split it open. The towering tusker fell to the earth like a mountain struck by a thunderbolt.

"When the Coḍa king came to know of what had happened, he immediately went and bowed down to Iruvattu's feet. With his hands on his head, he stood in contemplation and said, 'Alas! My elephant has killed a devotee. Not even Aja, Acyuta, and the rest are equal to one of Hara's devotees. Is the death of this elephant sufficient recompense? An elephant is a mere beast. What does it know? I myself am the sinner, for I am the owner of the elephant. Let me die. If I say that my death will make it even, let my mouth be eaten with worms. But still I will die and will become pure.' And with that, the king was about to decapitate himself in front of Iruvadāṇḍāri.

"Just then, Śiva appeared. He was pleased and brought the devotee back to life. He also made the mahout live again. Finally, he brought the tusker back to life. Then Śiva looked kindly on the efficacious Iruvadāṇḍāri and the Coḍa king. And he gave them a dwelling place in Kailāsa.

"Because it was in rut, the elephant killed a devotee. And it, too, died. But the Coḍa king was compassionate and agreed with the code that if a servant makes a mistake, it is the master who should be punished. He accepted as his own the treachery perpetrated by the elephant. If such were the case, what is the just punishment for your kind of mistake? Without fearing anything, you yourself sent it forth!"

The Story of Bāvūri Brahmayya

"Again there was a devotee of Black Neck, of untarnished reputation, named Bāvūri Brahmayya. He followed the heroic māheśvara tradition. He was lustrous with the glory of deep spiritual strength. He revealed his devotion in both words and deeds. His valor was unbroken. He was very stable. He was a master of heroism. He was full of courage. He was an unstoppable hero. He was an ocean of right speech. He was the best of śaraṇas, the best of the best. He occupied himself with serving the lotus feet of jaṅgama liṅgas. Tirelessly, he cultivated numerous flower gardens.

"At the first crow of the cock, he went out to pick flowers. These he made into garlands and gave to devotees. With the earnings from this profession he performed his regular worship of jaṅgamas.

"Once upon a time, to prove, in a dispute, that Gauri's husband was the author of all things, he made the stone bull eat grass and rice and lentils. On another occasion, he converted sorghum into liṅgas.[18] Already having performed these miracles, he was living a life of glorious devotion when one day a king and his armies went out to invade another realm. To the east of Bāvūru, near the flower garden, the king stopped to rest. While he paused there, his mighty elephant lost its senses; it became frenzied, destroyed its mahout, and got loose. As it ran amok, it drove away the whole army. It attacked at the mere sight of a moving shadow and hit at the sky. It tossed people about and killed many of them.

"But seeing the frenzied elephant running loose, Bāvūri Brahmayya was unafraid. He just kept on walking. When he stood directly in front of the mad elephant and said some spells, he stayed it with a shout, 'Hey!'

"Terrified, the elephant lost all control of its limbs. With a squeal it kept raising its trunk to the sky until it fell over backward. In the end it fell on the bank of the river. There, unable to move, it lost consciousness and died.

"The mahouts went to the king and fearfully reported, 'When your elephant got loose and was running amok, a devotee from this village was on his way back from picking flowers. Seeing the elephant, he became very angry, approached it, lifted his hand, and yelled, "Hey! Stand, you beast!" As it was commanded, the elephant fell back in fear and gave up its life on the bank of the river.'

"When he heard this, the king felt badly about the pain his elephant must have caused the man. Straightaway he went to that place, bowed at the great soul's feet, and said, 'This mad elephant has affronted you. Please forgive this sin.' And as he spoke, he fell prostrate.

"To the amazement of all the people, Brahmayya immersed the elephant in the ocean of his compassion and brought it back to life. Because the king sought refuge in Brahmayya, he also became fulfilled.

"O King, there are far too many stories of good devotees to tell them all. If you attack the devotees of Hara, they will kill you. But if you respect them and ask their protection, they will protect you. I need not tell you any more. O King, if you wish to live, get up. We will go there together. Mācayya is the Rudra of the *kali* age. He is not an ordinary man. This is what must be done."

Basava Asks Bijjala to Go with Him to Mācayya

Then Bijjala was ashamed and felt disgraced. He said, "You are right," and he understood everything. He went and fell prostrate before Mācayya at a distance.

Basava, the treasurer, prostrated himself at the feet of Maḍivālu Mācayya. With extravagant praise he began to speak, saying, "This is just like a person destroying his looks by cutting off his own nose out of pure spite just because someone else is telling him not to do it. The king was afraid to come, but now he is prostrate. Does one need a great weapon like Śiva's to kill a mere bird? Who is this king after all? Is there anyone who can face you in these fourteen worlds? Forgive this mistake, kind soul."

Mācayya Brings Bijjala's Elephant Back to Life

Then Mācayya agreed with these words and asked the king to stand up.

Quickly he assembled the hide, stomach, and bones. While all the people looked on fearfully, he sprinkled sacred ashes on the pieces and gave the peerless elephant back to the king. The corpse, which he had previously cast into the sky, fell into the street, to the great consternation of the people. Mācayya breathed the breath of life into the body. Then, while everyone looked on, he bent his back to receive the bundle of clothes from the sky. While the people sang his praises, he went on his way making his usual announcements.

Worshiping Mācayya's feet, Basava escorted him back to the monastery. Meanwhile, the king and his entire retinue bowed with folded hands.

Mācayya Hears Basava's Songs and Becomes Angry

Some days later, when Mācayya was once more going about his devotional business as before, Basava thoughtlessly composed a song and had it sung. As soon as the devotees began to sing in front of him, Mācayya angrily said, "Is this proper? Śiva, Śiva!" And he covered his ears with his hands.

"Alas that this wicked man should do this. O Kallinātha.[19] Alas that this base man has become a provider to the śaraṇas. Since when has he become such a monkey? When did he learn to ridicule and where is his devotion? This is atrocious! Can devotees actually listen to this? Don't ever sing such things in my presence again!" With that Mācayya angrily proceeded with his work.

Basava Goes and Asks Mācayya's Forgiveness

When he heard what had happened, Basava was troubled. Along with the devotees, he went and fearfully bowed at the feet of Maḍivālu Mācayya. With all his limbs touching the earth, he said, "I am constantly controlled by my ego. I talk inappropriately. I always commit offenses. I am given over to anger. I have abandoned truthfulness. I follow the ways of evil men. My desires remain unconquered. I am a heap of ignorance. My purity is lost. I am devoid of knowledge. I lack wisdom. I am the very diadem of inauspiciousness. I have no devotion. My thoughts are evil. I am immoral. Protect me, O merciful one. Annihilate my excessive pride.

"Thus far, I have composed 464,000 songs. Since you have not accepted them, I presume you see this as my fault and detest them. If you cannot say yes to my songs with pleasure, say no to them."

As Basava appealed to him with words of self-reproach, the constant devotee of jaṅgamas, the passionless one, Mācayya who was born of the liṅga, the courageous one, listened as if he were not paying any attention.

"You despicable creature! Have you become overly proud? Are the devotees of Hara inferior to you? Are you the lord of the treasury? It looks as if you have become despicable simply because there was no one in a position to question you. Alas! Alas! I have seen many beggars, but I have never seen a giver like you. But why all this talk? Basava, do the śaraṇas want anything to do with the beastly elephants, the yellow dust,[20] the cheap mules, the ill-natured women, and the red garments that you supply? Look here, I will show you how a jaṅgama can live without being poor," he said.

At once, he sprinkled some water around. The droplets of water became emerald, pearl, topaz, diamond, coral, lapis lazuli, and all manner of precious stones. And together they formed a mountain of gems. By comparison, the sun himself looked like a firefly. All the people were amazed, and Bijjala himself came to see it.

Mācayya stood there, and all the pramathas rained pure flowers upon him, as if Śiva had manifested in a worshipful form in order to bless Basava with his desired wishes. The assembly of jaṅgamas stood there as if Śiva, unable to understand the supreme efficacy of Mācayya's devotion, took multiple forms. Basava stood, close to the brilliant heaps of precious gems, as if he were admitting that he was a mere keeper of the treasures for the devotees. Basava fell prostrate before the lotus feet of Maḍivālu Mācayya, praised him, and asked for refuge, saying, "Who am I to witness your power? You are the gem of understanding, Saṅgayyadeva! You are the all-knower! You are Śaṅkara, and I am your servant. You are a pure man, and I am impure! You are a learned man, and I am ignorant! Your body is pure, and mine is poison. You are the supreme donor, and I am but a humble beggar. You are the lord of living beings, and I am a mere living being. You are the diadem of the three worlds, and I am foremost among the wretched of the earth. Is there any one good quality among the heap of bad qualities I possess? Protect me. Lord, give me an appropriate punishment for my pride. Master, tolerate my many mistakes. Your power is boundless. Why won't you exercise it?"

Mācayya embraced Basava and floated him on the ocean of his compassion. Then the devotees praised Mācayya and said,

"There is both anger and kindness in the liṅga."

"Even when you are buying an earthen pot, you first tap it with your fingernails. Why would God accept a servant without first testing him?"

"When a washerman beats the clothes, it is to get rid of the dirt. Mācayya has disciplined Basava in order to rid him of impurities."

"The more you heat gold, the more brilliant its color becomes."

"Sugar cane gets sweeter when it is finely chopped."

"If you cut a piece of sandalwood with a saw and grind it against a stone, its fragrance increases. Maḍivālu Mācayya has rubbed Basava against a stone and maximized his pure devotion," said the devotees, praising Mācayya.

Then Mācayya looked at his dear son, Basava, bowed to him with folded hands, and said, "Listen, what will happen to your devotion if you become egotistical?"

Mācayya Tells Basava the Story of Śaṅkaradāsi

"Haven't you heard this? Among the ancient devotees of Jaḍayaśaṅkara was a celebrated śaraṇa named Śaṅkaradāsi. He was fully capable of destroying the magic created by the action of time. He was able to remove the madness of sickness, birth, and death. He had given his soul over completely to the bliss of consciousness. Even Vīrabhadra[21] would have been impressed with his wrath and his aggressiveness.

He was Forehead Eye in visible form. He displayed the dynamic form of the great destroyer, Śiva. His pure fame was known to all. He destroyed the cycle of birth and death. His valor was incomprehensible.

"Although he was celebrated for these characteristics, he took on a disguise. He sewed up his blankets and robes and commenced selling them for whatever he could get for them. By means of this trade, he daily took in five measures of grain, neither more nor less. But with it he regularly served millions of jaṅgamas.

"It was while he was following this life style that Deḍara Dāsayya[22] came to see him, happily bowed down to him, talked with him for a while, and then went straight to his monastery.

"Deḍara Dāsayya felt great compassion for him and thought, 'Alas! He is very competent in the liṅga, but in his house there is not even enough bran to feed a fly. Śaṅkaradāsi has the power that comes from true devotion, but what has he got to show for it?'

"Because he felt so sorry for Śaṅkaradāsi, Deḍara Dāsayya told Duggaḷavva[23] to have a basketful of grain sent to him at once.

" 'So what is this? Has Deḍara Dāsayya sent me some grain? Well, that is very nice of him. He sells cloth for grain. But what is he going to expect for this, and do I have the capacity to pay? He felt that I was lacking something and had this sent. That was kind of him. What do I possess?' thought Śaṅkaradāsi. And with that he grabbed a handful of the grain, and the whole basketful disappeared in his fist.

"Along with the basketful of grain went Deḍara Dāsayya's inexhaustible grain bins and all the rest of his riches. There was not enough grain for food or even for a sample. The grain bins Deḍara Dāsayya had acquired fell to ruins."

Duggaḷavva Tells Deḍara Dāsayya of Śaṅkaradāsi's Power

"When Duggaḷavva saw her husband's surprise, grief, and humiliation, she said to him, 'So you played the rich man and proudly sent him grain? Who can examine an elephant's teeth and live? No one! Do you think that you are capable of knowing how the śaraṇas live and what they need? He did not even accept anything from Mṛḍa, and he ridiculed him instead. Do you even know what he earns, and how many jaṅgamas he regularly feeds? From his profession,[24] he gets no more or less than five measures of grain every day. And with that he takes care of all the millions of jaṅgamas. Do you think that the devotees of the liṅga suffer from poverty?' "

The Story of How Īśvara Gave Śaṅkaradāsi a Third Eye

"Śiva wanted to make Śaṅkaradāsi famous in all three worlds, so he appeared before him and said, 'Ask!'

"Smiling and unflustered, Śaṅkaradāsi said, 'You are the creator of creators. With you as my creator, what need do I have of another boon? But I know that you will feel ashamed if I don't ask you for anything. So I will make a request. What I would like to have is vision so sharp that I can thread a needle at night as well as I can in the daylight.'

"The boon giver responded with a lotus face of smiles and gave him a third eye. The eye was capable of humbling the pride of the other gods, and Śaṅkaradāsi at once commenced destroying all of the gods except Śaṅkara. The other gods were broiled by the glances of the burning eye on his forehead. But even though they were consumed by the fire and crumbled to pieces, he had no pity on them. He proceeded to kill anyone who had any pretensions to the title of divinity. As a result, some of the deities took refuge behind the Śaiva śaraṇas in alarm and bowed down to them. These Śaṅkaradāsi protected. But he made them his drudges and ordered them to do petty tasks for him. At least by that they could earn their keep.

"Masanaka[25] swept the litter from the courtyard. Kosanaka constantly pounded grain and husked a ton a day. Polaka guarded the monastery. Pĕddapoṭi carried firewood from the forest. Kāṭipāpaḍu tended the cattle. Mailāruḍu[26] from the city always carried the umbrella. Kaḍamalacĕṭṭi Kāṭreḍu[27] blew the trumpet. And while all the other deities were performing menial tasks by way of service, the eighteen yogic seats[28] never failed to render him yearly tribute. All the demigods and others bowed to him and worshiped him, saying, 'Three Eyes, we are the dogs of your house.' "

The Story of Jagadekamalla

"When he heard about this, Jagadekamalla thought with disgust, 'Is this man able to slay Hari? Is he able to kill the likes of Viṣṇu or Brahma and the other gods? Is it really such a big matter to conquer these petty deities? If he really received his third eye from Black Throat, and if it really is a powerful eye, then it is enough for him to stand directly in front of Viṣṇu without quaking.'

"So saying, he made a steel image of Govinda[29] in the middle of the city of Kaḷyāṇa and plated it with the five metals.[30] Then he consecrated it and worshiped it day and night without ceasing.

"When he heard about what was happening, Śaṅkaradāsi went to the place. Heroically, to the delight of the devotees, he threw open the front door of the temple and looked in. At once the image crumbled to pieces. The metal with which it was plated melted and dripped as if it were running to fall at his feet. After Śaṅkaradāsi had slain Viṣṇu, the people of the other faith became afraid and ran away.

"Don't you know the oft-told stories of the wrathful deeds of Śaṅkaradāsi? What more can I say? Can Black Throat himself protect us?

"Stay in the assembly of devotees and your respect and devotion will grow. If you leave that great assembly, they will be a sham. I do not really understand all this, only the lord understands. There is a saying to the effect that 'When he began to study, even the native intelligence that he had was ruined.' That seems to be what has happened to you.

"Grieving and repentant, Deḍara Dāsayya and Duggaḷavva went and fell prostrate before Śaṅkaradāsi."

Duggaḷavva and Deḍara Dāsayya Ask Śaṅkaradāsi's Forgiveness

" 'Lord, won't you protect us? Śaṅkaradāsi, you are our refuge and shelter,' they said and bowed with hands folded.

"Then Śaṅkaradāsi looked at them and said, 'Alas, who are these people? What a pity! Is this supplicant really Deḍara Dāsayya? O Deḍara Dāsayya, am I your equal? Is this appropriate? Why have you condescended to come here? Perhaps you were on your way somewhere else? Or were you coming directly here out of compassion? Hara, Hara! I was afraid that maybe you had forgotten us. I am surely glad that you have not. Is anyone else so respectable and devoted and yet so free of pride? O Deḍara Dāsayya, you are truly the sole support of the weak. O Deḍara Dāsayya, you are the patron of the devotees. Did you bring anything for us? Have you given life to our lord?

"Surely your granaries are full of the grain you received by selling clothing? Why haven't you brought some of it? What has happened to all your immense wealth? But why are we wasting time talking? Go get a spade! There may be a little money here that was left behind. Now dig!' he said.

"And when he made Deḍara Dāsayya dig in that jaṅgama dwelling place, he amazingly enough brought forth bars of gold.

"Then Deḍara Dāsayya and Duggaḷavva were amazed and fell on his lotus feet and were unable to get up.

" 'You always gave some grain as an advance for the yarn and the wages. Then you took the cloth. Ask Śambhu how he could go without paying you for that loss. Or, weave another cloth and sell it for a bushel of grain. You may also force all the arrogant people whom you have fed and clothed to pay twice or thrice the costs. Or, may the blessings of the poor and virtuous people help you.[31] By falling on the feet of a poor devotee,[32] how can you have something to eat, something to wear, and to give and save? If not, get away from my feet. Do you think that the suffering of the poor will go away just because you say that they are not suffering? But why go on talking like this? Take a few pieces of this gold that has come from the earth,' he said.

" 'Why are you telling me to do this, Three Eyes? I am blind with pride. I have committed thousands of sins. I am proud beyond comparison. Protect me by compassionately forgiving my sins,' he said, asking for refuge.

"When he had spoken like this, his soul was purified. To the delight of the devotees, Śaṅkaradāsi lifted the two of them up and allowed them to play in the ocean of his compassion. Through his blessings, Deḍara Dāsayya gained an even greater wealth of austerities than he had had before. Can a proud man be a good devotee, Basava?"

Mācayya Tells Basava the Story of Nimmavva

"There was a pure and steady devotee named Nimmavva. She never deviated from her heroic devotion. Her mind was subservient to jaṅgama liṅgas. She had the power that comes from freedom from the cycle of birth and death. She was good and gentle. She made her living by carrying food and water to the houses of Hara's devotees. Meanwhile, her son tended cattle for the devotees. And so the days went by with them engaged in their duties and attached to the jaṅgamas with true devotion."[33]

The Story of Siriyāla

"In Kañci a pious man named Siriyāla[34] faithfully kept his vows; daily he served food and drink to five jaṅgamas, according to their wishes. The lord of all decided to test the depth of Siriyāla's devotion and came in the guise of a good jaṅgama, a veteran of severe austerities. The merchant folded his hands above his head, praised the sage, bowed to his lotus feet, and said, 'Lord! Come quickly, great soul! Help your grandson[35] keep his daily vow.'

"Hearing this, the veteran of severe austerities said: 'Good man, if you give us what we wish, what more could we want for our enjoyment?' Then pleasantly, like a kind man, showering compassion on Siriyāla, he made a strange request for human flesh.

" 'Since you know everything, you must know that I have a son whom you gave to me. He has a perfect body and all the good qualities.[36] Is there any need for me to go to a neighboring house to purchase human flesh? I gladly pledge to accomplish your rarest of vows this very day,'[37] said Siriyāla and fell on the sage's feet like a penitent. He then went home and told his wife what had transpired and what was to be.

" 'Have no fear,' said Saṅgaḷavva, and at once she called her son home from school. 'Today is a festival day in our house,' she said and adorned him for the sacrifice.

"Devotedly, acting as if it were no more than a game, the mother and father killed the boy devotee, Sirāla, dressed him out, and prepared all kinds of curries without letting the people know what they were doing.

"Quickly they called Poison Throat, and washing his two lotus feet, they drank the water.[38] When they had seated him comfortably on a suitable seat, the lady and the merchant praised, worshiped, served, and prostrated themselves before him.

"Joyfully the sage surveyed the curries. But they had kept the head aside, and not seeing it anywhere, he said: 'You have hidden the head with the idea that by seeing it, you can cherish your affection for your son.[39] That is not right! There is not even a little head-meat here. This does not fulfill my vow. The word of the Vedas that "the head is the most important of all the limbs of the body" will have to be followed. Unless you bring the boy's head and give it to me, you will be unfulfilled.'

"When he said this, the husband and wife were afraid. 'Good sir! Great soul! What you say is true. We were afraid you might reject a curry polluted by hair, and so we put it aside. Now Candanaṅga[40] will cook it without further delay,' they said.

"Again they brought the food and offered the head curry. Black Throat looked at it from the corner of his eye.

" 'In the whole world there are not other donors of food like yourselves. Now the ritual has been well performed. You have made an offering that can never be equaled. In keeping with the occasion, I must sit on your left and you on my right. Now after the preliminaries, if we do not sit together and eat the liṅga sacrifice, it will be unacceptable to me. If you rescind your pledge, I will be on my way,' he said.

"Then the merchant was dizzy and afraid and, looking at his wife, he said, 'Why do you hesitate? Come!'

"When the liṅga ceremony was finished, and she had begun to serve, the veteran of austerities said, 'When entertaining a guest, the host should eat with his son sitting joyfully by his side. So how can you eat? I do not see your son. Where is your son? I told you that before, Siriyāla.[41] Tell me, how is it right for me to eat in a house where there is no son? It is said that a person without a son has no path. Can sages eat in the homes of men who have no path? If you have a son, call him. If you do not, is this fit for one such as I?'

"Then the man shook with fright, bowed down, and said, 'I heard what you told me before. I do have a son; he must be studying or playing. He will come soon to receive your blessings. Eat the rice and curries and protect us,[42] immortal soul. The food is getting cold.'

"Then the jaṅgama said to the woman, 'Won't you do as I say and call him? Can there be a son who will not come when his mother calls? Look in the four directions in succession, raise your voice, and call so that we, too, can hear you. Can he fail to come if you do that?'

" 'How can I refuse to do what he says?' she said and went out and began by facing the east. As the sage had commanded her, she raised her voice and began to call.' "

Saṅgaḷavva Calls Her Son

" 'Come, my son![43] You destroy the tenacious karma acquired in past lives. Come, my little one! You are more than a match for the god of the south.[44] Come, my boy! You are capable of eliminating the death and sorrow of future births. Come, my son! You are most dear to the prince of yogis who rules the north.[45] Come, my lord. You will gain a state more blissful than heaven. Come, my child. You are capable of destroying the weapon of the lord of death. Come, my little man! You will be able to break the fetters of attachments. Come, my father! You have not become entangled in the net of desire for money, women, and sons. Come, my little bachelor! The ascetic king[46] of the gods who is all ready to give boons praises you. Come, my master! The king of ascetics who cancels death will be pleased. Come, my baby boy! You force us to swim across the terrible and senseless ocean of the cycle of birth and death. Come, O eldest son of the one who lives a meritorious life in Kañci. Come, bridegroom of devotion! The divine maiden of liberation comes with her retinue to marry you. Come, my son! Your father's right shoulder is throbbing.[47] Come, my Sirāla, resident of the house of riches, for the sun is setting in the west. Come, my dear, and eat this blessed food with the companion of the lord of wealth. Your presence will make it tasty for him,' she said, calling for her son. And as she did so, she mentioned the names of the four corners of the earth.

"Earrings shone; locks tossed; jewelry glittered; bells gently tinkled; forehead ornaments shook; fate was amazed; the joy of it was universal. While his ankle bells jingled; while the lady of liberation approached; while everyone's doubts were cleared up and everyone was surprised; while the bystanders sang songs of praise; while the gods doubted themselves; while the ascetic looked on; while the father swelled with pleasure; while the mother stretched out her arms to embrace him; while the atmosphere was electric; while the people of the three worlds watched; the boy came home!

Suddenly Īśvara manifested and stood before Siriyāla, who, along with his wife and son, fell prostrate on the earth. As if they had just awakened from a dream, they looked about with wonder, and they sang praises.

"Lord of wealth, lord of speech, lord of the gods, best of sages, lords of the directions, all of them, praised. The rudra gaṇas, the ancient assembly of devotees, Vīrabhadra, and others gathered around to worship. The good devotees sang praises with hearts full of amazement. And the God of gods took Candanaṅga and all her dear ones, Tiruveṅgāṇi[48] and her friends, Siriyāla, Sirāla, and the seven neighborhoods[49] of Kañci to Kailāsa in his divine, golden flying chariot.

"In Kailāsa, in the assembly hall of pramathas, Siriyāla looked at Bhava himself, the pramathas, and the son whom he had served as a meal on earth, and said, 'Has anyone else ever done such a thing? Has anyone else killed his own son, had him returned by Mṛḍa, and then been taken to Kailāsa? Is there, even now, any other devotee to compare with myself?'

"Śiva saw how conceited he was, and how he was swelled up with pride, and said with a smile, 'Come, Ciṟutŏṇḍa!' Then he took him by the hand, brought him back to the earth, and stood him in front of Nimmavva."

The Story of Nimmavva (Continued)

"The woman was very startled. In a state of agitation she went to them and washed their lotus feet. Then she performed the necessary ritual service for the disguised forms of the liṅga. That done, she prepared the five kinds of dishes along with rice-milk pudding and all the rest.

"When Śiva and the merchant[50] pretended to sleep soundly like weary travelers, Nimmavva took time to go out to get water for washing their feet and for drinking. But just then the boy, who had been tending cattle and who was tired and hungry, came in, saying, 'Mother! Mother!'

"He pushed the door open with his stick and peeked in. Not finding his mother there, he looked around. And seeing the sweet cakes, he mischievously ate one.

"At that instant, Nimmavva returned. Knowing full well what had happened, she said 'Shoo! You dog!' as she came into the house. 'The boy has sinned. He has taken Mṛḍa's food and eaten it. He has committed treason against Śiva,' she thought.

"With a piece of green firewood she smashed his skull. Then she dragged the dead body away. What more is there to say? She did not have even an ant's worth of attachment for her son. She took his corpse, and so that the townspeople would not know, she threw it in a ditch and covered it with trash. With a joyful heart, she began making more food.

"Śiva wanted to talk to the merchant privately about the boy's death and said, 'Did you see that, Ciṙutŏṇḍa? Her son could not bear his hunger and did not know what he should do, so he took a sweet cake! Without even waiting to see whether he had really eaten it or not, she said, "My preparations have all been rendered useless by this. I don't want anything more to do with this treasonous dog!" And with that, she grabbed her very own son, killed him, dragged him away, and tossed him there in a ditch! Look at that!' And with his toe, he pulled away the trash she had used to cover the boy.

"Ciṙutŏṇḍa was amazed and shook his head in awe and approval.

"When the woman had finished preparing the food, she bathed the jaṅgamas. After completing all the liṅga rituals, and while she was serving the meal, the killer of death, as if he did not know that she had slain her son, said, 'O lady! Just a minute ago a boy who must have been your son was here, and he seemed to be very hungry. I wonder where he went? And I wonder what he is doing now? Alas, he seemed to be very tired. It looks to me as if you are completely without compassion. Hara! Hara! My hands won't move to eat. Haven't we given birth and raised children before? Even when food has been prepared for auspicious or inauspicious rituals, is it right to eat it when there are children around? Woman, why did you have no compassion and serve us without feeding the child? It is not right for us to eat when there are hungry little children. Don't delay. Call your son wherever he is.'

"When Śiva was finished, the woman said, 'Do you think you can get by with this just because I am a woman? I know your magic. And I am not stupid, Black Neck. Why do you keep trying to tell me stories? Do you mistake me for Siriyāla? You cannot get away without eating this food. Do you think that I am ignorant and that I will be deluded by you? Do you think that I am tied to my child? Now that I have killed my son, I am not going to call him back again. Kāma Killer, I do not want anything to do with the Kailāsa that you have to give. He had died for the treason he himself committed. And I will not even consider having the traitor back again.'

"When Siriyāla heard this, he was engulfed in an ocean of grief, bent his head low, and was ashamed. Then he praised the pure devotion of the steadfast woman.

"After that, Kāma Killer appeared in his true form and stood before her. 'Say now! What is the meaning of this, my lord? Is this the kind of thing you are supposed to be doing? Great soul, is this what a great soul should be doing? Do not be mistaken and think that you can distract Nimmavva the way a mother tries to make her child forget her breast by giving him a piece of rice candy. The body fits the life breath, and the life breath fits the body. And I do not want to leave you who have the form of both liṅga and jaṅgama. Why should I indulge in moods that lead to delusion? Won't the devotees laugh at both of us if we succumb to these deceits? Why do you have all these many forms? Did I ever look at you with the slightest bit less favor because of your form? You may have three eyes or you may have no eyes. You may appear in the form of Hara or in the form of a human being. Aren't you still my guru as long as you are associated with the supreme guru? Black Neck, why are you confused? I don't think of you as separate from me, and there is nothing to be afraid of. Did you wear a black throat when you restored Guṇḍayya's youth?[51] Did you go to Bhogayya's[52] house with Gauri? Did you wear a crescent moon when you accepted gifts of clothes from Dāsayya?[53] Did you ride Nandi when you went to Mānakañjāra's house?[54] Did you have four arms when you went to Ciṙutŏṇḍa's house? So stop these tricks! I am wise to all of them. Take whatever form you like, but I am going to feed you.'

"When Nimmavva had firmly spoken these words, Kāma Killer smiled, said, 'Let it be so,' and began to eat. To the merchant, Siriyāla, he said, 'Didn't Caṇḍeśa,[55] Kāṭakoṭa,[56] and others kill their fathers and dear ones when they strayed from the path? Didn't they cut them up? And didn't they ask for them back when I appeared?"

The Story of Narasiṅga Nāyanāru[57]

" 'Listen, and I will tell you of another one like that. Among the ancient śaraṇas of the Drāviḍa[58] country, there was a king called Narasiṅga-mŏnnāyanāru who was a devotee of mine. Once when his chief wife was on her way to worship Parameśa, she picked up a flower that was meant for worship and smelled it.[59] At once the flower boy cut off her nose. When the Coḍa king came to the place, the female attendants of the queen bowed and said, "Lord! Your wife has not committed any sin. As our lady was walking along, she sniffed a flower. Then your priest accused her of smelling a red waterlily that was intended for the liṅga and cut off her nose."

" ' "Alas! This is very wrong! Is it proper for you to have done such a thing?" he said. Then he called the flower boy and said, "O bachelor,[60] is this right devotion on your part? Don't you have any sense? Shouldn't you first cut off the hand that touched the flower and then cut off the woman's nose? If you yourself do not know how to behave, how can I hope to teach you?"

" 'When he had spoken, the king summoned his own wife, raised his adz, and said, "It was arrogant of you to touch that flower. Now lift up the same hand that you used to touch the flower that was meant for Īśvara's worship, just as you raised it then."

" 'With that he cut off the fingers that had touched the flower. Then he lopped off the hand that had held it. After that he cut off the forearm that had reached out. And, finally, without any regrets, he did away with the upper arm.

" 'Then I appeared. I returned the severed pieces of the woman's hand and arm along with her nose, which had been cut off and thrown away. Then I gave the king the liberation of eternal proximity to me, and he accepted it while the others stood by, amazed, and bowed down and praised his zeal.' "

The Story of Kŏṭṭaruvu Coḍa

" 'Not only that, once King Nāra Coḍa's chief queen ate grain from my grain bin. Without any consideration for the fact that she was pregnant, he was about to slay her along with the child in her womb. Then I praised him, and he asked for liberation. When I appeared before her and asked her to tell me what she wanted, she did not consider my offer worthless, and she asked for a boon. But when Nimmavva's son made a mistake, she was so passionately devoted that she killed him. Of course, there is nothing wrong with that. But when I appeared before her, wouldn't it have been all right for her to have asked to have him back? What can be said about her strength? When I asked you to kill your son, you killed him. But I did not even ask for her son. And after you had killed your boy, you called for him. She will not even call him again.

" 'When there are so many devotees of this sort, how can you say that there are not devotees superior to yourself, Siriyāla? Is it proper to talk proudly of your devotion?'

"When he had spoken, the lover of devotees returned Nimmavva's son's life breath to him and sent him to Kailāsa. But Nimmavva said, 'Serving the jaṅgama liṅgas is superior to all the four classes of benefits.'[61] And she stayed on the earth.

"When you do good deeds, don't talk proudly about them. If you become too proud, your devotion will be weakened, Basava, my son."[62]

The Story of Halāyudha[63]

"Not stopping with that, Hara took Siriyāla by the hand and asked him to follow along. They dressed like devotees and went to the village where Halāyudha lived. Halāyudha eagerly bowed to the māheśvaras and completely forgot himself in his humility. He performed all the appropriate rituals to their satisfaction. After pleasing Three Eyes, and while they were engaged in conversation, he said, 'How far have you come? You look as if you are tired after your long journey.'

"By way of response, Śiva said to him 'We constantly go around as jaṅgamas attending to the business of visiting great devotees. In fact, our entire support comes only from the devotees. They worship and praise us as their supporting liṅga. We have been worshiped by Tiru Nīlakaṇṭha, Varagŏṇḍa Pati, Karikāla Coḍa, Ariyama Rāju, Yĕḷayadaṅguḷi Māra, Eṇādhinātha, Cedirāju, Vāgīśa Nāyanāru, Cerama, Śvapacayya, Somāsi, Māra, Piḷḷa Nāyanāru, and by all the rest of the many devotees. How can I even mention the particular places? There is not a devotee's house in this world that I have not entered. There is not a devotee in the world who does not know us. For a long time now our days have been spent with the approval of those great devotees who had previously never been satisfied with anyone. There are countless devotees who have fashioned images of me. My life is a rare kind. I was born and raised in a place called Nirāḷapuram. I was born, but I do not know anything about my earthly mother and father. Nimmavva carried me, nursed me, and raised me up. Kembāvi Bhogayya[64] taught me how to walk. When Nambi[65] sent me out to run errands for him, I learned to talk. I learned to eat when Cĕnnayya made me sit by his side and fed me with love. With Dāsayya as a model, I learned to wear clothes. Mānakañjāra cut his daughter's tresses and gave them to me for my matted locks. When he saw that I was living as a libertine, Ballaha[66] provided a woman for me. Concerned about where I got money for my sexual pleasures, Mŏnnayadhara gave me three times the daily dole. I enjoyed the pleasures of the women at Dākṣārāma both day and night. And then the day before yesterday, I went to Siriyāla's house. There I saw his son, and this lord became my friend. Halāyudha, except for people like you, with whom can I share my pleasures and pains?

" 'Listen to a greater wonder. Before my very eyes, Siriyāla took the seven neighborhoods of Kañci to Kailāsa, and among them his own son. Is there anyone in the world who can compare with Ciṙutoṇḍa?

" 'Malahara decided to find out what was in Siriyāla's heart and he sent to him many devotees who had vows to fulfill. Siriyāla served Black Throat by giving them sugar-cane juice and whatever else they desired. So Hara caused it to rain for twenty-one days in Kañci. Siriyāla had resolved to always give food to five lords, but that day there were none there. Then the great god himself came as an ascetic and asked Siriyāla for his son. When he asked, Siriyāla prepared a dish out of the meat of his own son and served him to Mṛḍa. Then Śiva returned the son and arranged for him to revel in Kailāsa. We were there on that day. One can zealously talk like a devotee, but is there another devotee in the world who is capable of cooking and serving his own son?' said the jaṅgama, singing Siriyāla's praises.

" 'What is this that you are trying to tell me? Is Śiva really a man-eating demon? And is the good devotee, Siriyāla, so devoid of devotion that he would treat his own son like an animal? You are great men, and thus your words cannot be false, but is such a thing possible?' he said, convinced that it was a lie.

"Then the jaṅgama said, 'Listen, Halāyudha! Among the ancient devotees there were countless millions who gave their wives. And there were billions more who gave their sons. The number who offered up themselves was even greater. So is it right for you to say that there are no such people in the world today? When Hara wanted to test the heart of a devotee, he came and asked him for that thing which was most difficult for him to give, and the devotee gave it without the slightest hesitation. Has such devotion been born only in the mind of Siriyāla? Because Black Throat asked, Ciṙutoṇḍa gave his son, Sirāla. Won't you check into this and believe me?

" 'In fact, in every village in the world, among the great congregations of devotees, the story of Siriyāla is made into songs and sung. People compose long works in prose and poetry in praise of him. Not only that, they make them into dramas complete with words and action, and enact them. And it is not only by these that it is sung. The story is also sung at the mortar and pestle and at the grinding stone. Don't doubt it for a minute.' "

Halāyudha Hears the Story of Siriyāla, Becomes Angry, and Excommunicates Śiva and Siriyāla

"When he heard these words, Halāyudha was enraged. 'Why did this have to happen? What made Hara ask for meat, and why did the merchant, Ciṙutŏṇḍa, serve his son? How can a lover of devotees eat a devotee? If Ciṙutŏṇḍa himself were a devotee, how could he kill a devotee? Hara! Hara! Most certainly such a lord and such a devotee are very extraordinary! And you can be sure that there are no others who are like them. How could a child live if his mother were a demoness? Alas! Śiva himself has become a demon! Is it right for him to lose control of himself like this and follow his passions in his ripe old age? And as for this man, it looks as if he developed the usual greed associated with being a merchant and killed his own son out of a desire to satisfy it. To begin with, devotees never touch meat! So why would a devotee feed it to others? And then, why would people glorify such a person? Of course, there is nothing wrong with wanting to discover the depths of the man's devotion. But if Mṛḍa had any sense, couldn't he have given his approval as soon as Siriyāla lifted the knife to kill his son? Not only that, if this Ciṙutŏṇḍa were actually an intelligent devotee, would he have been willing to kill his son and save himself? But no, he still held onto his own life. Even if the boy were his own son, he was a jaṅgama, wasn't he? How could he possibly kill a jaṅgama like that without any qualms?

" 'If there is a fire in your neighbor's house, your own house may catch fire. But if there is already a fire in your own house, what can possibly save it? There is a little saying that the outer grief does not affect the inside. So this is how devotion should be! Can't Mṛḍa stomach anything besides human flesh? If Siriyāla had such devotion to Īśvara, why didn't he have himself cooked up and served to Black Neck? How can this be construed as anything but an act of violence against a devotee?

" 'Then, of course, fearing that he would be blamed for hurting the son and deceiving the father, Śiva ordered the parents to call him. But, then, why didn't Ciṙutŏṇḍa reply that he had just sacrificed the boy and that it was improper to call him back?

" 'After all this begging and killing, Śiva must have been afraid that he would be viewed as a devouring beast. And so what did he do? He regurgitated the son! And all that after he had eaten his belly full, belching loudly as he did so!

" 'So the merchant got himself some karma, and the lord has brought a curse upon himself! Isn't that right? This is my response to that! May the demon who ate a devotee, and the butcher who killed a devotee and all those countless ignoramuses who write stories about it be excommunicated along with those who read them,' said Halāyudha and clapped his hands to add emphasis to his words.

"Śiva and Siriyāla were very frightened, and being completely unable to bear his angry looks, they stepped aside and looked at each other in a state of consternation.

"Then Halāyudha looked at both of them and said, 'Because you are jaṅgamas, I have to respect you. I do not blame you for any stories you might have told in the past. But henceforth, if you ever forget what I have said and tell the story of Siriyāla and Īśvara in front of the devotees, may you be in the same class as Hara and that merchant.'

"Kāma Killer was afraid to respond and thought of Uma."

Pārvati Comes with Saṅgaḷavva and They Ask Halāyudha to Purify Their Husbands

"Pārvati came like an embodiment of the lady of devotion herself. And along with her came Saṅgaḷavva. When Halāyudha saw their jaṅgama forms, he bowed down, invited them in, and performed the appropriate rituals.

"Then Ambika[67] said, 'It is well known that although Brahma and Viṣṇu keep their wives in their mouth and on their chest, respectively,[68] they constantly go about with whomever they desire. So what can be said for their characters? In fact, Gauri is the only one who does not know anyone but her own husband, even in her dreams. We are the followers of that great, chaste, and virtuous wife, and we are also constantly devoted to the feet of Hara.

" 'Now we have come because we hear it loudly proclaimed that Halāyudha never fails to give devotees everything they ask for, even to the extent of his own body. Halāyudha, won't you give us what we want and be blessed by us? You follow the great Śaiva tradition!

You are a constant devotee of the natural liṅga! You relish good devotion! You are proud of the truth! You follow the liṅga! Your fame is permanently established! You are an invincible śaraṇa! Your body is pure! You are a strong man! You are a scholar in the knowledge of liberation!'

"When he heard them praising him, Halāyudha affectionately folded his hands and said, 'It is well known that I am a servant of the devotees. Do I really deserve such praise? It is the role of a master to give. But all our devotees have great powers. Ask for whatever you want.'

" 'This is the wife of Ciṙutŏṇḍa. I am the wife of Īśvara. A woman who is separated from her husband is useless, and so is a husband who is devoid of devotion. Therefore, overlook the shortcomings of our husbands, have compassion on them, and be friendly toward them. Won't you endow our husbands with devotion and make us auspicious women?' asked the daughter of the mountain in a way that called up great compassion. But even before that, the wife of Ciṙutŏṇḍa bowed down.

"And Halāyudha and the māheśvaras granted refuge to Hara and the merchant."

Śiva Appears and Shows Favor to Halāyudha

"Then the unborn great soul, Pārvati's husband, the slayer of Kāma who has the blessed throat and the terrible eyes, appeared and stood before him. On both sides stood the millions of pramathas and rudras, worshiping and praising him. From behind, Tiruveṅgāṇi and Siriyāla praised them. In front were the blissful bowing multitude of devotees, gods, demons, and Brahma and Viṣṇu, who, among others, gathered around and sang praises. All the sages put their hands on their heads by way of blessing. Tumburu, Nārada,[69] and others were singing. The trumpets of the gods were resounding. Singers recited the stories of Karikāḷa, Siriyāla, and others.

"By that time, Halāyudha had stretched out with his forehead on the lotus feet of Forehead Eye. His lotus face shone from being anointed by tears of bliss. His voice shook, and his body thrilled with excitement. His heart was a confusion of humility, surprise, desire, bliss, and ecstasy.

"Then Black Neck embraced Halāyudha affectionately and praised him for his great devotion, his brilliant mind, his courage, and his unswerving steadfastness.

"Everyone was astonished. Quickly, while Liṅgamūrti's[70] eyes sparkled, he took Halāyudha, the nine towns that he ruled, and all the Śaiva devotees to Kailāsa in a brightly shining fleet of flying gold chariots while the fullness of devotion shone and while bliss welled up.

"In order to rid Siriyāla of his pride, Hara made Halāyudha great. Therefore, Basava, my son, proud statements are never appropriate from a devotee."

The Story of Miṙumiṇḍa Nāyanāru

"There was a very famous devotee named Miṙumiṇḍa Nāyanāru.[71] He enjoyed the bliss that comes from constantly worshiping jaṅgamas, and he had driven away the passions. He was famous both for his ability to curse and his ability to bless. His mind was fixed on oneness with Śiva. He was a killer of evil men, but he protected good people.

"For twelve years he steadfastly performed the Śivarātri ritual in the town of Cegoṇḍa.[72] At the end of the thirteenth year, he went to Cĕllam Tiruvālūru[73] and devotedly spent a sleepless night in the house of Vālmīkideva."[74]

Ŏḍaya Nambi[75] Comes to the Temple of Vālmīkideva[76]

"Meanwhile, Nambi left Paramanācamma's[77] house and went to the temple of Vālmīkideva. There the people of the town gathered around and worshiped him. The crowd pressed in from all the lanes and alleys and shouted, 'Hurray! Hurray!' The poets praised him with all kinds of beautiful compositions in prose and verse. Jesters laughed. Readers and heralds praised his character. Singers bowed down with cymbals in hand. The king of sages[78] blessed him. And he paused and stood, giving them what they wanted.

"His toenails shone like pendant jewels on the breast of the lady earth. His shining ornaments gleamed like pearls on the foreheads of the cardinal elephants. The incomparable brilliance of his divine body shone like the morning sun. His teeth gleamed like the mirror-bright face of the goddess of beauty. His glances shone like the lotus feet of Vālmīkideva himself. The precious stones on his crown were like the peaks of the mountain of the gods. He fully looked the part of a libertine and he floated on the ambrosial ocean of Hara's endless compassion. Carrying a staff with a golden ferrule, he whirled and laughed and reeled and gyrated along the paths, offering his hand, glancing happily about, and playfully hitting the air. He bantered with his companions and roughhoused with them as he went along, thinking of women. Pleased with himself, he looked at his own shadow out of the corner of his eye. His heart swelled with pride and shone victoriously. And like a libertine, he happily walked in with sandals on his feet.

"And without even bowing or folding his hands before the group of true devotees who were assembled, Ŏḍaya Nambi entered the temple without a moment's hesitation, and asked for his daily allowance."[79]

Angered by Ŏḍaya Nambi's Pride, Miṙuminḍa Excommunicates Him

"Miṙuminḍa was enraged and shouted, 'Hey! Who does this guy think he is, anyway? He doesn't care a whit for the cardinal elephants of the noblest of kings. What's more, he doesn't recognize the stature of our devotees. Does he think that Vālmīkeśa[80] is going to protect him? Even if Forehead Eyes gets angry and curses someone, the devotees can give protection against him. Once the mighty assembly of devotees gets angry, can Īśa himself protect anyone against them? If this Nambi is so full of pride that he cannot even see, isn't it about time that we throw him out of the temple?'

"When they heard this, the bystanders were amazed, and a temple priest folded his hands and said, 'Lord! Haven't you heard? I do not know whether it is his songs or his devotion that Vālmīkeśa likes, but every day, without fail, he gives him a thousand *māḍas*[81] as his daily allotment. When he asks, the god gives even more without a moment's hesitation. He indulges Nambi just like a son. He even acts as a pimp for him when he goes to the harlot's house.[82] In this indulgence, he bestows on him all the riches that he can possibly use, and he has thereby given Nambi the status of a libertine. Not only that, the god sits like a buffoon and flatters the two lovers. He even plays the cultured artist and entertains them with all kinds of appropriate amusements. As a confidant, he takes on all the services and daily tasks. But why go on? Śiva has completely sold out to this Nambi.'

" 'So this is Nambi? And he is the one to whom Śiva gives a daily allowance! That is just wonderful! Now we will have a chance to test both his devotion and the affection of the one who gives him everything,' thought Miṙuminḍa.

" 'Well, then! May all the devotees excommunicate this *Nambi smambi* and this *Sambu smambu*[83] who gives him everything,' he said, and had a bell rung.

"All those who were present were astonished and said, 'They can't stay here any longer!'

"When Śaṅkara saw how angry the devotees who were assembled in the front porch of the temple had become, he wanted to make it clear to Nambi that he feared the devotees and that his body was inseparable from those who were devoted to him."

Fearing Miṙuminḍa, Vālmīkeśa, in His Own Form, Flees with Ŏḍaya Nambi

"Vālmīkeśa, like a frightened man, suppressed his voice.[84] He signaled Ŏḍaya Nambi to join him and took on a physical body. Shaking, he asked Ŏḍaya Nambi to hold the side tie of his lower garment.

"Being loath to face the assembly of devotees, he moved silently toward the water drain,[85] carefully placing one foot in front of the other. His movement was furtive, and he made every effort to avoid the light of the lamps. He attempted to suppress the sound of his footsteps as he crouched and headed for the corners. His hands explored the rock wall. He was attentive to the sounds in his own throat. And he stealthily moved on through the hanging fresh-flower garlands.

"Very hesitantly, and with a pounding heart and a good deal of strain, he left the womb house[86] of the temple. Ever so slowly, he crept out and managed to gain the support of the door jamb. Together with Nambi, he first peeped through the windows and then stepped inside. He was afraid to leave and afraid to stay. He was in a state of great agitation; his knees buckled under him; and he shook violently.

"Vālmīkeśa avoided the clusters of people, and he hid from the temple priests. The sight of the assembly of devotees made him afraid, and he shaded his eyes with the palms of his hands. Faint with grief, he left the front porch of the temple and headed straight for the outer wall in the rear. He wondered if anyone was chasing him, and he kept stopping and turning around to listen. Then, turning back again, he went fearfully forward. He shrank from the sound of every leaf that stirred. Now and again he stretched his full height and looked around in every direction. Then again he crouched and cast furtive glances here and there.

"Finally, he loosened a stone in the wall with his toe so that it tumbled to the earth. Fearfully he slipped out through the hole. Once out, he took a series of short steps followed by longer ones and ultimately broke into a run and went racing down the path.

"When he had run about two miles, he came to a marvelously beautiful grove of trees. But instead of entering it, he stood in front of it, perplexed. 'Is this a village? It doesn't really look like it. But it doesn't look like a wilderness, either. The branches of the trees give evidence of having been tended. In fact, the grove looks like it must be a royal garden. Well, what does it matter to me whether it is a terrible wilderness or a royal park, just so it is not an inhabited village,' he thought, and left the path that he had been following and entered the dense grove of trees.

"Passing through a grove of tamarind trees, then a mango orchard, he came at length to a beautiful pond. There he met with coral, *vakuḷa*, *bandhūka*, cassia, areca, and *kovidāra* trees. The path that he took made its way through sandal, camphor, *campaka*, aśoka, and *mandāra*. He then passed citron, amaranth, and coconut. One area was lush with jasmine, oleander, great jasmine, multiple jasmine, and *nāgakesara*. His heart was filled with joy as he went through wild jasmine, tender *mādhavi*, and grapevines.

"The new shoots, flowers, and clusters of leaves shone brightly. There he saw the tree that grants offspring,[87] surrounded by *punnāga* and banana plants. In front of the trees was what appeared to be a temple, and he stopped in his tracks and looked at it uncertainly.

" 'Can this really be a temple here in the middle of this forest? Or is it an all-giving tree? Are those golden vessels hanging from the branches of this tree, or are they clusters of coral flowers? Are these garlands of precious stones, or are they clusters of jasmine? Maybe they are some other kind of flower. I wonder if this tree has created a temple for us by surrounding itself with flowers? But maybe it is a huge bush with delicate blossoms? I cannot really tell whether these are simply banana plants or whether they are fans wafting cool breezes over this beautiful tree. These banana plants form a wall around the tree. There is no question that this has to be the all-giving tree,' thought Vālmīkeśa.

"Entering into the cool shade of the beautiful tree and utilizing the fallen flowers as his throne, Śiva seated himself comfortably, filled his chest with deep breaths, and looked at Nambi. Meanwhile, he wiped the perspiration from his body and flipped it away with his fingers. Then he turned his face to the cool breezes that came from the movement of the banana trees. He was intoxicated by the fragrance of the myriad flowers. His heart yielded to the aroma from the camphor and sandalwood trees. He stretched out his neck so that the pollen shaken down by the bees that were attracted by the fragrance of the trees fell on his head. In this way Śiva rested after his exertion.

"At last Nambi could control himself no longer. Hesitantly and devotedly, he said, 'Lord! What does this mean? Why should a person of your stature be afraid?' "

Vālmīkeśa Tells Ŏḍaya Nambi of the Power of the Devotees

"And Vālmīkeśa replied, 'By all the standards of the Veda, Vedānta, purāṇas, and all the other śāstras, is there the slightest difference between me and my devotees? I am the life breath of the devotees, and the devotees support me. To worship my devotees is to worship my feet. I have no body apart from the devotees. To praise the devotees is to praise me. To blame the devotees is to blame me. It makes no sense to show disrespect for our jaṅgamas, for there is nothing to be gained by serving only the stationary liṅga. Isn't that what the śrutis say? The devotees are my body, and I am like a parent to them. The devotees are my life breath, and I am totally under their control. It is by submitting to their devotion that I acquire a good name.' "

The Story of Bāṇa[88]

" 'Let me tell you how it is. There was a heroic and steadfast māheśvara named Bāṇa. He regularly supported devotional acts. Every day he performed a thousand complete *pūjās* for Liṅgamūrti. In fact, he was so involved in it that he did not even have time to attend to his own bodily needs. So I gave him a thousand arms to go with his matchless devotion so that he could perform a thousand rituals at one time.

" 'But when people heard how I had given him so many arms, the multitudes of devotees gathered around to see him. This made Bāṇa wonder how he could possibly perform the liṅga worship as had been his habit. But by the time he had completed the pūjās for the liṅga and had begun to eat the remains of the offering, I myself stood as a guard at the door and held off the crowds, talking with them and preventing them from coming in.' "

The Story of Piṭṭavva

" 'Again, in a place called Mudigoṇḍa, King Karikāla was having the Kāveri dammed up. Every family had to go to work on the dam. "I will go in your place," I said to Piṭṭavva. Because I loved her devotion, I agreed to do her share of the bonded labor.' "

The Story of Kalikāmadeva[89]

" 'And then there was a gaṇa named Kalikāmadeva who wanted to make clear what the relationship between master and servant should be.

" ' "Alas!" said he, "This Ŏḍaya Nambi does not have the slightest consideration for the fact that the lord's divine lotus feet might be sore, and he sends him on all kinds of trivial errands involved with his private affairs. He even sends the lord to his courtesan's house. Even though the devotees of Tiruvālūru know that this is going on, they do not do anything about it. They do not bring up that it is wrong to send Śiva on such errands, nor do they arrange for Nambi to have another servant. They simply do absolutely nothing about it." And Kalikāmadeva was very angry with the people here.

" 'He was so enraged that he began to kill anyone who mentioned the name of this village or this affair, no matter how strong the person was. Then I went there and talked to him and made peace between him and the devotees. Didn't I?

" 'Why all this? Did my grandfather ever put me up as collateral and borrow anything from your grandfather?[90] Am I under any obligation to do favors for you? Is there any reason why I should do menial tasks for you whenever it pleases you? Isn't it only because of your great devotion that I do all of this? So why have you developed this high and mighty attitude? And why do you stand up so proudly in the midst of my devotees? They say that "bad qualities are the results of bad company." That is precisely what has happened to me. It is all your fault that this discord has developed between me and my devotees.'

"Thus, with many examples, did Kāma Killer inform Nambi of the power, greatness, and behavior of the devotees. He also instructed him in morals, humility, devotion, and truth and showed him the path to the jaṅgama phase of devotion.

"Nambi fell prostrate and said, 'Great guru! You are famous throughout the world! You have humbled my pride. You have pointed out the true path of the jaṅgamas and set me on it. I am fulfilled. One way or the other, I am going to regain the devotees' good graces by humbling myself, seeking protection, praying for refuge, praising them, falling at their feet, serving them, and singing for them. Watch and see how devoted your son will be from here on.'

"From then on, he was always in favor with the devotees. And he fell prostrate on the earth before them. He also played finger cymbals as he bowed and set the stories of the devotees to music, creating auspicious songs with rāgas appropriate for the time and mood."

The Story of Ĕṇumūrti Nāyanāru

"He joyfully sang biographies of one devotee after another in this manner:

" 'I am the servant[91] of Ĕṇumūrti Nāyanāru.[92] Every day he offered sandalwood paste to his prāṇa liṅga three times a day. He spent all his money in this way until he was completely impoverished and was unable to get sandalwood paste anywhere. When this happened, he thought, "So what if I have no money? Is money worth anything in the absence of devotion? A lack of courage and not a lack of money is real poverty. If I am worried while I still have my mind and body, will the lord appreciate me? I will grind my entire body into sandalwood paste and offer him that.

" ' "If it is bloody, if it is sticky, if it is of an inferior sort, if it is not brilliant, if the quality is poor, if it is of insufficient quantity, if it is of the wrong shade, if it lacks beauty, if it runs off when I apply it, if it is discolored, if it smells bad, if it curdles, if it is not bright enough, if it is not cooling enough, if it does not spread well, if it is not smooth, if it is not fragrant enough, then there will be a problem between Śiva and myself. But why worry about that now?"

" 'And with that he set about grinding his left elbow against a stone to produce sandal paste. Then he offered it to Śiva in worship and won his approval. Finally, while everyone watched, he mounted a flying chariot and was transported to the city of Mṛḍa.' "[93]

The Story of Kaḍamala Nambi

" 'I am the servant of Kaḍamala Nambi.[94] He vowed to keep a thousand eternal lamps burning for his prāṇa liṅga. And to that end he spent all that he had. But even then he did not hesitate, and he thought, "Except for my body, I have spent all that I have. Now is the time to give that up, too. Let me ignite my head and my body and make a big lamp."

" 'And with those words, he loosened his hair, set fire to it, and gained Śambhu's favor.' "

The Story of Guggulu Kaḷiyāru

" 'I am also the servant of Guggulu Kaḷiyāru.[95] Every day, three times a day, he offered frankincense to the lord of his life breath until he had spent all his wealth, including his wife's *maṅgaḷa sūtram*.[96]

" 'One day while the serpent maidens[97] were singing in the abode of Śiva in Tiruparandhāma, the Lord of Serpents[98] suddenly reeled and fell forward. Despite many valiant attempts, the king of the areas was unable to set him straight again, and became very agitated. At that point, Guggulu Kaḷiyāru said, "Give me as much frankincense as I need, and I will get Forehead Eye up on his feet again."

" 'Then he took the frankincense and poured a heap on the ground, and with the king's permission, he fell prostrate. Rejoicing, he tore off a large piece of cloth and tied one end to Īśa, and the other end to a knife. Then he placed the knife at his throat, fell back, and the Lord of Serpents stood up just as he always had. Śiva then manifested and showed compassion on him, and Guggulu Kaḷiyāru reached a state of no rebirth.' "

The Story of Arivāḷu Nāyanāru

" 'I am the slave of Arivāḷu Nāyanāru.[99] Three times a day he gave fine rice to his liṅga. In this way his entire fortune was expended. When he was left without any other recourse, he acquired a sickle and went out as a day laborer with the understanding that he would be paid in fine rice. In order to satisfy his vow, he gave whatever he earned to his liṅga.

" 'Nevertheless, a time came when he was not able to get any work. For five days he went without food. At last he managed to secure a measure of rice. But as he ran to bring it, in his excitement, he fell to the earth, and the rice fell in the cracks and crevices.

" ' "City Slayer, I was coming to make an offering to you, but it spilled. Now I am going to kill myself," he said.

" 'Then, without the slightest hesitation, he took the sickle from his waistband, put it to his throat, tied a cloth around the back of his neck, and got ready to kick.[100] Parameśa was exceedingly pleased with his determination and appeared on the earth, and showed compassion to him. And Arivāḷu Nāyanāru was reborn in a divine state.' "

The Story of Aḍibharta

" 'I am also the servant of Aḍibharta[101] who lived in the Pāṇḍya country. He knew no other profession but regularly cast his net into the water, and whatever fish came into it first, he released to Śiva. Whatever else he caught, he took to the market. With the money he received, he worshiped jaṅgamas. Once after he had been doing this for a long time, it happened that for seven straight days he caught nothing, and as a consequence, he became discouraged. But finally, on the eighth day, he cast his net, and the first thing that came into it was a golden fish. At once he threw it back in honor of Śiva.

" 'Again he cast his net, and again he caught the same fish. He then tried another bank where he again cast his net. Just as before, he caught the same fish. In fact, the entire day he kept catching and releasing the very same fish. He was convinced that it was wrong to take the fish that was meant for the lord of his soul for his own use. So he went home and passed the night.

" 'The next day he did not return to the same river. Instead, he went to the east to a lake and again cast his net. Again he caught the very same fish. This time, however, when he released the fish and again caught it, he smiled and said, "Wherever I look, I find Śiva's fish. I am going to cast the net one more time, and if I catch Īśvara's fish this time, I vow that I will never touch a net again."

" 'With that he raised his net, cast it with all his strength, and hauled it in. In the net, to his amazement, appeared Śiva, complete with three eyes, four arms, and his vehicle, Nandi. And he gave Aḍibharta the status of lord of the pramathas. And he enjoyed eternal bliss.' "

The Story of Eṇādhinātha

" 'I am a servant of Eṇādhinātha,[102] who in fulfillment of a vow worshiped his prāṇa liṅga by always wearing ashes and rudrākṣa. He reigned in a place called Elāpura. There he defeated the surrounding kings, levied taxes on them, and collected tribute. To the rulers of the world, he was like a spear in their chest.

" 'When they saw how he conducted himself, the other kings set up a certain commander with the symbols of Śiva and sent that man and the army against Eṇādhinātha, who, in turn, came out with his forces to meet them.

" 'As they were battling, Eṇādhinātha saw the ashes and rudrākṣa and said, "Śiva! Śiva!" He then threw down his weapons and fell prostrate.

" ' "Enough of you," said the commander, and struck him on the neck with his sword while Eṇādhinātha bowed to it as to a liṅga.

" 'Then the eternal one manifested himself and turned the sword into a flower garland, while out of his compassion he granted him indestructibility. And he ruled the land with great renown.' "

The Story of Cedi Vallabha

" 'I am the servant of Cedi Vallabha,[103] the husband of the lady of liberation. He was so devoted that he treated all those who wore ashes and rudrākṣa as Śiva himself. Then the foreign kings who were defeated in battle and had run away dressed up thirteen men as devotees of Rudra, complete with the five brands, and sent them out to meet him. When the men, wearing these pseudosymbols, appeared before him, Vallabha bowed to them with humble devotion.

" 'The evil worshipers with their sharp, cruel weapons wounded him grievously. But even after seeing what they had done, he could not think ill of them. Instead, he regarded them as his gurus and bowed down to them. At that point Pārvati's husband manifested himself, stood before him, and granted him an exalted and eternal status.

The Story of Karayūri Coḍa

" 'I am the servant of the servant of Karayūri Coḍa,[104] who is known for having given a head with knotted hair to a head with matted hair. He had vowed to regard those who wore the symbols of Śiva as his prāṇa liṅga. As he sallied forth confidently and devotedly, he attacked the enemy kings, cut off thirty cartloads of their heads, and brought them back. But one of the heads, being caked with dried blood, looked as if it wore matted hair.

" 'When he saw this, Karayūri Coḍa cried, "Hara! Hara!" And at once he cut off his own head and offered it to the other.

" 'Immediately Kāma Killer manifested himself, stood before him, and compassionately granted him liberation.' "

The Story of Kaḷiyamba Nāyanāru

" 'I am the servant of Kaḷiyamba Nāyanāru,[105] who dwells in the compassionate house of Malahara. A son of one of his slaves was unwilling to work and went out and began wearing the liṅga. When the boy returned, Kaḷiyamba Nāyanāru did not think of him as the son of his slave. Instead he regarded him as a lord and washed his feet.

" 'But his wife said, "Can't you see that this is Malla, the son of our Siriyaka? Why do you wash his feet?" Scornfully, she remembered what he had been before, and she refused to pour the water.

" ' "You have insulted Hara," he said, and at once he cut off both of his wife's hands. And Malahara compassionately gave him liberation.' "

The Story of Iruvadāṇḍāri

" 'I am a beloved slave of Iruvadāṇḍāri,[106] a devotee of Paṇḍurāṅga.[107] While he was spending his days devotedly worshiping jaṅgama liṅgas, the Slayer of Death came in the form of a devotee and gave him his blanket and loincloth, but then he made them disappear. Later, when Śiva came back and asked for the blanket and loincloth, Iruvadāṇḍāri went to look in the place where he had hidden them.

" 'Unable to find them anywhere, he said, "I will give you an equivalent weight of clothing." And he brought out a balance and had the devotee put another blanket and loincloth on one side. On the other side, he himself put very many clothes, but even then they did not balance. Not stopping there, he put on a vast amount of money and everything that he had in his house. And, finally, he himself got into the balance.

" 'His benefactor was immediately pleased with him and gave him pramatha status.' "

The Story of Yĕḷayadaṅguḷi Mārayya

" 'I am the dear servant of Yĕḷayadaṅguḷi Mārayya.[108] Once when he was making every effort to live up to the difficult vow of making all his possessions available for the satisfaction of the jaṅgamas, Śiva came in the middle of the night, completely drenched with rain.

" 'When Mārayya saw that the ascetic was shivering, he tore down his shack and set it afire. When the ascetic then indicated that he was hungry, he got seed he had planted the day before, washed if off, parched it, and husked it. Then, he joyfully cooked it and devotedly served it.

" 'Śiva was pleased and gave him liberation and happiness.' "

The Story of Gaṇapāla

" 'I am the servant of Gaṇapāla, who became a pramatha gaṇa. He vowed that he would not let a single bhavi remain in his country, but make them Śaivas. If they hesitated, he would explain to them the meaning of the Veda and show them the sources. If they did not respond to that, he would show them visible proofs. He would give them as much money as they wanted. Finally, if they still would not become a devotee of Black Throat, he would simply kill them.

" 'In order to test the depths of his vow, the lord of all came in the form of a vĕlama[109] and wailed, "O King, I have no money to pay you tribute or courtesy gifts, nor can I pay your taxes and rent. Take any amount of free labor from me. I have never given any trouble about such things. It is not right to harass me!"

" ' "Hey, farmer! How did you sneak past the doorkeepers and get in here? I will give you land entirely rent-free. All you have to do is to become a devotee of Śiva," said the king.

" ' "No devotee has survived in my family before, and devotion does not bring luck to me," he said.

" ' "Leave that to me. I will take care of your life. Furthermore, I will give you money, my love, and my kingdom. All you have to do is to agree," said the king.

" 'But when the farmer refused to accept any of these offers, the king became enraged. He began to brandish his sharp sword and was about to cut off the man's head.

" 'Instantly Hara manifested himself and said, "Ask for whatever you want."

" ' "Boon giver, I do not want any of your boons. All I want is for you to become a devotee," he said and gave Śiva a liṅga.

" 'By showing the greatest devotion to the one to whom the pramatha gaṇas bow down, he himself became a pramatha gaṇa.' "

The Story of Kummara Guṇḍayya

" 'I am the servant of Kummara Guṇḍayya.[110] One day he went to the temple of Black Neck in Pĕnupaṭṭapulūru. That night when he was returning home in the darkness and was unable to see, a woman threw out some dirty water from the upper story of a house, and it landed on his head.

" ' "Hara! Hara! Lord of my life breath!" he cried.

" 'At that the woman came down and fell prostrate before him. She then took him into her house, shampooed his head, and fixed him up. And after being forgiven by him, she sent him on his way.

" 'But when he got home, his wife thought that he had been to a courtesan's house and angrily refused to have intercourse with him.

" 'Unwilling to be so easily put off, he said "What of it? Come here!" and began pulling at the skirt of the lotus-eyed lady.

" 'She, in turn, responded by saying, "I swear by Black Throat that you shall never touch me again." And for the next eighty years of their lives they adhered to that vow.

" 'Then, one day, the supreme lord came as a devotee and gave them an alms bowl for safekeeping. But when he returned, the alms bowl had disappeared. When they were unable to find it, the husband and wife began to shake with fear.

" 'Then the ascetic said, "I don't really believe you. You must either give me the bowl or promise to do what I tell you."

" 'While all the people looked on, he shoved the husband and wife into a deep pool of water. Instantly they came up rejuvenated to the prime of their youth. At the same time, Forehead Eye manifested himself, stood before them, and compassionately granted them another eighty years of blissful life on earth. And then, Kummara Guṇḍayya became a pramatha.' "

The Story of Pūsala Nāyanāru

" 'I am the servant of Pūsala Nāyanāru's servant.[111] He lived in the realm of Vikrama Coḍa, who used his gold in the construction of a temple and consecrated the liṅga. With auspicious feelings Pūsala Nāyanāru had built a similar temple in his heart, a tower made of precious stones, and this won Black Throat's[112] approval.' "

Stories of Other Devotees

" 'I am the servant of Tirupāla, who rejected a kingdom for a topknot.

" 'I am the servant of Tirukurvi, who always worshiped the lord of Tirunavakapur as the lord of his life breath.

" 'I am the servant of Tirumūladeva[113] of Tiruvūru, who got the grace of Śiva along with Rohiṇi.

" 'I am the servant of Ciṙupuli,[114] who worshiped daily a thousand devotees and gained liberation.

" 'I am the servant of the servant of Ciṙuttŏṇaya, who received a māḍa from Bharga as his daily allotment.

" 'I am the servant of the ancient devotees who have passed on. I am the servant of the new devotees who live today. From now on, I am the servant of the devotees who serve Śiva and get everything they want.'

"These were the beautiful and auspicious songs of the lives of the devotees that Nambi sang. He praised them, prostrated himself with all his limbs on the ground before them, bowed with folded hands, and said, 'You are my refuge. I am your servant, your messenger, your slave, your child, your bondsman, your adopted son, the recipient of your charity, and your serf. Mercifully protect me.'

"When Nambi went to meet the devotees, his lord came along with him. And the devotees received Nambi, who was asking for protection, while they met Abhava and bowed down to him. Black Throat showed favor on Miṙumiṇḍa Nāyanāru and gave him and all the assembly of devotees a place to live in Kailāsa. But he kept Nambi back on earth. Therefore, O Basava, my son, how can a devotee flourish in devotion if he is full of pride?"

By devotedly telling stories of good devotees of the past interspersed with sound advice and good morals, Mācayya did away with Basava's excessive pride. Then he gave the mountains of gems that dazzled the eye to the jaṅgamas and bid goodbye to him. Basava fell prostrate at his feet and then went happily on his way with the devotees.

All the people fell prostrate and said, "Truly this was the god himself." Then they held their hands above their heads and went on their way with the king.

As before, Mācayya, with his power of devotion, continued to be respected by the three worlds.

Whoever reads or listens with understanding to the great story of Maḍivālu Mācayya will be steadfastly devoted to Hara and will gain the ability to acquire the seen and the unseen and the ability to speak well.

You are very devoted to your guru! You have the strength of devotion to your guru! You are involved with devotion to your guru! You have the ritual that pertains to your guru! You see to the comfort of the jaṅgamas! You are a servant of jaṅgamas! You do everything in a way that is acceptable to jaṅgamas! You are acceptable to jaṅgamas! You enjoy worshiping the liṅga! You are a great devotee of the liṅga! Your life is absorbed with the liṅga! You support the liṅga! The corner of your eye is comforting! Your body is graceful! You have the comfort of devotion in all places! You shine in all places! Your name is Saṅga!

This is the work of the good poet and fortunate soul Pālkuriki Somanātha, who enjoys the fragrance of the lotus feet of the innumerable māheśvaras and who is immersed in the ambrosial ocean of pleasure that is derived from the blessings of the jaṅgama liṅga. It has benefited greatly from the poetic spirit graciously bestowed by Karasthali Viśvanātha.

This is the fourth chapter of the story that is known as the *Basava Purāṇa*.

CHAPTER V

The Story of Kinnara Brahmayya

Source of riches! Ocean of devotion! Evil fears you! Good qualities originate with you! Saṅga!

There was an Īśvara devotee called Kinnara Brahmayya[1] who was steadfastly and one-pointedly committed to the heroic vows. He was firmly devoted to the Śaiva creed. He was worshiped by all the worlds. His goal was the transcendent. He was adorned with supreme devotion. He was an expert in music. He had taken a physical body in order to destroy sin. His heart was full of love and compassion. He was kind to all living beings. He was the supreme example on the śaraṇa path. With great devotion, he performed servile tasks for the devotees.

Kinnara Brahmayya lived in Poḍūru, and there he earned money in a thousand different ways by doing a variety of jobs. But he did not hesitate to spend all of his money on the devotees.

On the day when he was playing the *kinnara vīṇa* before Śiva, he found favor with the one to whom the kinnaras bow down, the one whom Nārada praises, the one who enjoys music.[2] The god gave him the name Kinnara Brahmayya, and granted him as his daily allotment a *māḍa* and one and a quarter *rūkas*.[3] He took the allotment and was giving all his time to the jaṅgamas.

When the fragrance of Basava's devotion was permeating the entire earth, Kinnara Brahmayya came with a desire to see him. Learning from Saṅgameśvara that Kinnara Brahmayya had come to see him,[4] Basava went out to meet him, fell prostrate, and was very hospitable toward him.

Basava took the water that had washed Brahmayya's feet onto his hand. Then the two spent some time talking about the experience of submission to truth, and Basava was very happy.

One day when things were proceeding in this fashion, Kinnara Brahmayya went and sat contentedly inside the tower of the Tripurāntakadeva temple in that city.

As Brahmayya sat there, a paramour came along the street leading a sheep he was going to butcher for a dancing girl. As he dragged it along, suddenly the rope broke, and the sheep ran into the temple. When the man followed it and tried to catch it, Kinnara Brahmayya, who had been watching him, said, "Hold it! Stand where you are, you shepherd! The sheep is afraid to die; that is why it has entered the temple. To kill it now would be a sin. If you do not agree, just name your price, and I will buy the animal from you, even if you ask twice the regular rate. The devotees of Mṛḍa will never agree to give up any living being that has taken refuge. And even an idiot would not consent to its being killed. Isn't pain and death the same for all animate beings? What advantage is there for you in killing this sheep? Surely the lady did not put her brand on this very sheep? I imagine the only thing in the world that you cannot get your hands on is gold. Isn't that right? But even if you ask for a whole māḍa, I will give it to you. Here, take it!"

"Amazing! Has the world ever known such intelligence? Does a person go out and buy a sheep and then abandon it just because it strays into a temple, a field, or a sacrificial pit? You may be the only morally upright person in the world! But how can you expect a sheep to keep to a straight path? I have never seen anything like it. But enough of this! If I am late, my whore will be very upset," said the paramour.

And then, to himself: "Oh, yes, he proudly claims that he will pay for it. He really is very kind! He claims that pain and death are the same for all animate beings. But why, then, do they say that a human life is worth a thousand māḍas? Who is lying? He wouldn't let me kill the sheep, so surely he can give me even a thousand māḍas to save it."

As he was about to go, Brahmayya called, "Stay where you are, you idiot." Then he quickly went and got a thousand māḍas and gave them to the man. "Watch out! I am not going to let you get by with breaking your word. Take note of what I am doing, for I am going to brand it and let it go."

"Just as you say," said the other. He took all the money and set out for his whore's house. But as he walked along, he got to thinking. "What am I going to look like if I do not have a sheep for her?" So he went out and bought another one.

But when he finally got to the house, the lady was angry and would not let him come in.[5] "Get out of here! What kind of paramour are you, anyway? All the rest of them will laugh at you. You worthless shepherd, you should be ashamed to enter my house! Don't you have anything to give to me but talk? Am I going to have this gold sown in the streets! Bah! Is this the way to treat a whore? Later I can harvest it and pile it in heaps. How can I go on living, and what can I say to my rivals? Of course, a paramour can sell sheep. And he and the rest of the people can do just fine. Hurray for them! But what happens when people start talking and taking me lightly, and what happens when the other women make fun of me? Will I ever be able to hold up my head among them again? You had better be aware that I have a lot of pride," said the woman haughtily.

"I am not going to leave you. For the next big festival day I will buy thousands of sheep with these thousand māḍas, and I will herd them along in a big flock. Not only that, I will give you as much money as you can possibly spend. I won't make you small among the other women. Be happy and celebrate the festival," he said.

"That sheep was bought for the gods. And without it there will not be any festival. If we try to make a substitution, the gods may kill us," she said.

"All right, just as you say!" he said. And as if to illustrate the saying that a man who is blind with lust will do anything, he quickly went back and grabbed the sheep.

Immediately Kinnara Brahmayya confronted him: "Don't touch that! I swear by Basava Rāja[6] that I will cut off your head if you so much as touch it! Do you think that I would hesitate for a minute? The title our devotees hold is Diamond Shelter of the Refugees," he said. When Kinnara went up to him, the man drew his sword. Then Kinnara became enraged and swung his sword and killed him.

When he was slain by the sharp sword, the man's head fell outside the Śaiva temple. Thinking that it was a sin for the body of a man who had broken his promise to remain within Śiva's house, Brahmayya had the body dragged outside and thrown into a ditch while crowds of people watched.

When the *karmi*'s[7] relatives heard the news, they first grieved for their loved one, and then they went to the king. Weeping and wailing, they said to him, "He didn't do a thing wrong! He just followed his sheep into the temple and caught it, and then some devotee named Kinnara Brahmayya, just because he was stronger, killed him outright."

The king looked at Basava in a rage and said, "It is said that Hara's devotees are kind and compassionate. Is it right for them to kill a man who has done nothing wrong? You do not even seem to want to let people live in this city. What business do you have with sheep? You kill people as if you thought that there is no king in the world who can face you. Is it right for a king to kill an innocent man? And is it right for devotees to do so? Kicking, serving meat, killing children, throwing stones, eating with other castes, decapitating one's own father, giving away one's wife[8]—when they do these things, they say that they are perfect dharma. But, of course, they are not to be done by others!

"So why don't you take charge of this realm? I am no longer able to rule it. Why should I constantly live in fear? Why shouldn't you take over the kingdom?" he said.

"King Bijjala, what right do you have to talk like this without even knowing what has actually happened? Is this a respectable way to behave? Karmis always go against dharma; devotees never go against dharma. Listen! Kinnara Brahmayya has a very good reputation, and he is no child. Is it likely that he would kill for no reason? How could he do such a thing? And how can you talk like this? It is about as smart as telling a man to tie the calf in the lane when someone announces that a bull has given birth.[9] Find out what needs to be done, and don't just talk! Send a few appropriate people to investigate the situation. How have you managed to digress so far from what you should be doing? Don't you understand what is happening?" said Basava.

Then the king asked some of his ministers to go to the Tripurāntaka temple.

As soon as the ministers saw Kinnara Brahmayya, they bowed down and said, "Brother! Brother! Are you doing the right thing? Why should a devotee like yourself resort to violence? Why have you reduced yourself to the level of a man who is caught up in the affairs of the world? What possessed you to cut this man's throat? You have unnecessarily brought blame upon yourself. Of course, there are wicked, worthless, obstinate men, but why should you get involved with their affairs with regard to sheep? The king has dispatched us to investigate what has happened. What more is there to say?"

"Why should I listen to this idle chatter? He was dragging the sheep along, the rope broke, and the animal went into the temple. So I told him to leave it alone and let it go. Furthermore, I said that I would be happy to pay him whatever he asked, even if it were twice or thrice the real value. But he refused to accept the offer. Instead, he ridiculed my wanting to pay a thousand māḍas and let it go rather than let him have it. He could not believe that anyone would give a thousand māḍas for a sheep. In answer to his ridicule, I amazed everybody by giving him a thousand māḍas. Then I swore, 'I will not give you this sheep if ever you want to go back on this deal,' and I branded it with Śiva's mark.

But when his woman taunted him, he ignored the fact that he had sold it to me, waited a bit, and then came back and put a rope around the neck of Śiva's animal. I then told him to stop and when he would not and drew his sword, I cut off his head! So who is at fault? Tripurāri himself is my witness. If you want, I will make him speak."

When they heard this, the ministers were astonished and went back and reported to the king.

"Excellent! So this is the spirit of devotion. He certainly is a slippery talker. Has anyone else ever claimed to be able to make Tripurāri talk? Let's find out whether there is any substance to what he says or whether this is just another one of his tricks," said Bijjala, and he went there in royal splendor.

Then Basava joyfully went and bowed to the lotus feet of Kinnara Brahmayya, and said, "You are the fulcrum of the pleasures of life. You are Śiva's sword. You are the residence of auspiciousness. You are the abode of pride. You are the glory of victory. You have an abundance of good judgment. You have many praiseworthy qualities. Your devotion is unshakable. You are truth. You are the light of this place. You are the king of faith. You are the essence of good fortune. You are the personification of worship. You are a mine of renunciation. You are the meaning of the āgamas. You are the boundary of happiness. You are a heap of peace. You are the perfection of devotion to good people. You are the height of self-control. You are the delight of valor." Thus he praised him in incomparable, appropriate words, in great humility.

The retinue worshiped him and the devotees gathered around, but the priest had left earlier, locking the temple door and taking the keys with him. But Kinnarayya simply smiled and looked at the door for a moment. His eyes were half-closed, and there was no doubt in his mind. At once Tripurāntaka opened the doors wide, in fear.

The people were astonished and said, "We had heard about how he once opened the door for Dāsi,[10] but now we have seen the same thing for ourselves. Even as we were watching, Tripurāntaka's doors have opened. Hurray! Kinnara Brahmayya will most certainly be able to make him talk."

While the bystanders watched, Brahmayya happily went forward and called out to Śiva: "O Śiva! Ŏḍaya Nambi was making love to a woman, and when he fondled her breast, he was reminded of you and called out, and you responded. O Śiva! When Dāsamayya was disputing, you called out from within an ant. O Śaṅkara! You were in Bāvūri Brahmayya's sorghum, and you spoke to him from there. You are my only support, won't you speak to me?" said Kinnara Brahmayya softly as he placed his hand on the hilt of his sword.

Then, thinking of Śiva's devotees, Brahmayya faced the great one and called out, "O Tripurāntaka!"

"Yes!" came the reply.

Except for the liṅga wearers, the people were shocked and swooned and fell back in a stupor. All the movable and immovable living beings,[11] including the birds, animals, serpents, humans, elephants, and horses, lost their strength, became flaccid, and expired in their tracks.

The city looked topsy-turvy, and all the worlds were in chaos. The earth quaked, the sun set, stars fell, mountains crumbled, the ocean dried up, the tortoise shook, the sky bowed down, the king of serpents weakened, the wind god abated, the god of fire was subdued, Brahma was startled, Viṣṇu was amazed, the end of the age arrived, the worlds were destroyed. Then the pramathas filled the worlds, destroyed them all, and sang and danced and enjoyed themselves, while the devotees gathered and made a great festival of the occasion. For seven days and seven nights the celebration went on without pause.

With a sense of compassionate obligation to the universe, Basava bowed to Kinnara and said, "You adorn the good people. You are the esoteric truth. You are the mainstay of the world. You have the same form as Īśvara. You are the abode of auspicious qualities. You are efficacious and agreeable. You are another form of the liṅga. Your courage is faultless. You conquered pride. You are benevolent. You keep evil men at a distance. You destroyed your entanglement with this world. You are merciful. Your body is pure. You are the master of heroic vows. Your valor is superior. Your merit is infinite and unbroken. You enjoy bliss. You love śaraṇas. Your name is praised. You are Rudra incarnate. Kinnara Brahmayya, have mercy on us!"

Kinnara Brahmayya put his hand in Basava's. He smiled, looked at Three Eyes, and stopped it all with a word, "Hey!"

With that all the worlds returned to their previous condition. And when the people of the capital city looked around, they saw that everything was as it had always been. All the mobile and immobile beings came back to life. Bijjala regained consciousness.

He and his people fell prostrate and said, "O Lord! Grant us freedom from fear! Your fame is wonderful! Lord, grant us freedom from fear! You are very powerful! Kinnara Brahmayya, it is to you that the gods bow down.

"We are blind; we are unfortunate; we are unintelligent; we have lost our minds; we are ignorant; we have made many mistakes. Is it possible for us to know the dimensions of your greatness? Forehead Eye himself followed your orders. He answered 'Yes' when you called, and he stopped when you said 'Hey!' In a minute the fourteen worlds had been destroyed. Now that you have shown your compassion, they rejoice. By any estimation, it was a most amazing thing that you did. In this world and the next, you are Hara, and you are Śaṅkara. You are Bhava and you are the devotee. Is there anyone in the world who can claim to be your equal? Throw us into water or throw us into milk;[12] we have no other recourse but you. You are the only protector, not only for us, but for all living beings who are created by the word of Brahma. Therefore, look at us out of the compassionate corner of your eye," and again they bowed to him and praised him.

With a smile on his face, Brahmayya said, "Live in fear of the devotees of Black Throat. What more is there to say?" And with that Kinnara Brahmayya, the śaraṇa, brought the man who had been beheaded back to life in front of the onlookers.

Basava and the devotees were delighted. Bijjala was amazed and convinced that he was none other than Śiva. The fame of Kinnara, the true devotee, spread throughout the three worlds.

If one reads the story of Kinnara Brahmayya or listens to it zealously, he will gain devotion, the ability to reject everything else, the ability to enjoy, and all the pleasures that he desires.

The Story of Kalaketa Brahmayya

There was a vociferous devotee named Kalaketa Brahmayya[13] who had great faith in jaṅgamas. He also had great affection for the liṅga. His character was good; his spirit was unbroken; he was capable of destroying both kinds of karma. He looked at gold and dirt as the same; he was liberated in his lifetime; he was eternally united with the liṅga; he was universally praised; he had rejected the world; he was a mighty warrior; he destroyed sinners; he had a profound experience of the pure liṅga; his character was remarkable.

His costume included a rattle and a ram's horn like Dakṣa's. In his hand he carried a club like Trivikrama's[14] backbone. In other words, he wore the costume of a juggler. And he went about visiting the houses of the devotees.

"The ram, the vehicle of fire in Rudra's eye, the destroyer of the other sects, has come! The mad elephant of Vīrabhadra has come, and it is capable of destroying the followers of Jina.[15] The devotees' feast-giver has come! The beloved of the pramathas has come! Duggaḷavva's son has come! Saṅgaḷavva's[16] younger brother has come! Come, mothers! Come, sisters!" he invited, making them laugh.

Every day he earned a measure of rice and performed all kinds of services for many jaṅgamas. One day an unshakable devotee came along on his way to see Kinnara Brahmayya. But being very tired and unable to go any further, he stopped and stayed with Kalaketa Brahmayya.

"I'm tired! My body aches! My feet are cracked! I have worked so hard! Can it really be this difficult to reach him?" he said. And, looking at Kalaketa Brahmayya, he continued, "Śiva once gave a daily allowance to Nambi. And as everybody knows, he now does the same for Kinnara Brahmayya. At least that is what people are saying. When I heard about it, I set out to see for myself. I had an idea that he might be able to help me get rid of the sorrow of my poverty. But now that I have gotten this far, I am really suffering. How much farther is it to his monastery? I have got to get there. My thirst will not be quenched until I see him."

Hearing this, Kalaketa Brahmayya replied, "Don't be so extravagant with your praise. Do the workmen get the whole estate or do they just get the wages they have earned? How can those who seek after results attain the unending bliss of association with the liṅga? Are these positions and profits any big matter for the assembly of Kāma Killer's devotees to acquire? But how can you even hope to go that far when you are so tired? Here, take as much money as you want." And with the club that he held in his hand, he touched a nearby heap of stones. At once they turned into money and lay on the earth like a heap of *taṅgeḍu* flowers.

The devotee tied up the cash in his upper cloth, and with tears of joy in his eyes, he put it on his back. Then he ran straight to Basava's house and set down his bundle. Without a moment's pause, he told him step by step about everything that he had gotten and about what he had brought. "Basava, I myself am not capable of carrying all the money that Kalaketa Brahmayya gave me. Won't you assign someone to help me?"

When he heard this, Basava was amazed and said, "Is this typical of the devotees of Īśvara? What can a person say about such people? He is a juggler by profession, but his power is most surprising. We say that the all-giving tree is great, but even it only gives ordinary pleasures and not liberation. The capacity of the all-giving diamond to give may also be great, but can it supply the eternal fulfillment? And what about Mount Meru?[17] Can it give anything else but gold—something to eat, for example? The same is true of the all-giving cow. It only gives what people ask for and not anything permanent. Kalaketa Brahmayya's power appears to be greater than that of any of these givers. Furthermore, except for śaraṇa, there is no one who could speak lightly of Kinnara Brahmayya. Probably he is Saṅgameśa himself. Has anyone ever heard of anyone else doing such things? He has taken this earthly form just because he does not want to show his real form. Why else would he be like this?"

Then Basava gave the devotee a servant to assist him, and he himself went to visit Kalaketa Brahmayya. There he fell prostrate before Brahmayya with his hands folded above his head and joyfully praised him.

Kalaketa Brahmayya said, "Basava, is there another devotee in the world to compare with Kinnara Brahmayya? Once Śiva gave an allotment to Ŏḍaya Nambi; now he gives one to Kinnara Brahmayya. Both were able to make Śiva speak and thereby got a daily allotment from him. This is what comes of worshiping Śiva to the fullest. Why indulge in empty talk? You must ask Forehead Eye for whatever you want. Where else can it come from?

"Alas![18] We have worshiped for so long but we have nothing to show for our efforts. We have not received so much as a trifle. He, on the other hand, has gotten results from Śiva at the snap of a finger. What purpose do people like us, who are devoid of merit, serve?

"Is it not great to get gold simply by a snap of the finger? All day long we work so hard that the sweat runs off our noses and falls on our chests, and we are sorely troubled, but we do not get so much as a measure of grain.

"But remind Kinnara that he has a lot of expenses; many people come to ask him for things because he once got an invitation to visit the silver mountain, and because he also got Śiva to respond to him. So in addition to what Śiva has kindly provided him, I would like to give him what little I have. I have put aside a little cash from the odd jobs that I do and buried it in the ground. So I can add that to what he gets. After all, we who worship the feet of Śaṅkaradāsayya cannot say no to anyone. Basava, tell that Brahmayya of yours to send carts, even by the thousands, and I will fill them with money!" And as he spoke, he casually picked up a handful of ashes, and it became glittering gold.

Basava was amazed and sang his praises. When Kinnara heard about it, he went and fell prostrate on the earth before the wise Kalaketa Brahmayya. The latter, in turn, rejoiced and embraced Kinnarayya. Anointing him with the nectar of his compassion, he showed Kinnara the means by which he could gain the transcendent. He also gave him an experience of churning the liṅga with prāṇa that is not subject to logical investigation. He then delighted them both by serving a meal that had been offered to the liṅga. When this was done, he bid Basava and Kinnara Brahmayya goodbye, and as before, Kalaketa Brahmayya remained steadfast in his devotion.

Those who read, hear, or write the story of Kalaketa Brahmayya will be favored with the compassionate glance of Abhava and gain whatever they desire.

The Story of Moḷiga Mārayya

Among the Black Throat's devotees, there sported a man named Moḷiga Mārayya.[19] He was Rudra in disguise; his fame was great; he was engaged in pure activities; his mind was free from lust and anger; he was firmly committed to unity with the liṅga; his character was pure; he had a zeal for the liṅga; he kept his body free of desire; he constantly worshiped jaṅgamas; he had rejected both prescriptions and prohibitions; his body was clean; he was otherworldly; he enjoyed experiencing the ultimate essence; he had freed himself of karma; he knew the secret of churning the liṅga with his life breath. Every day he went into the terrible forest and carried back great loads of firewood, which he sold in the marketplace. With what he earned, he served jaṅgamas.

Even after they had enjoyed all the delicious food in Basava's house, the jaṅgamas remained unsatisfied, and one day they came to Basava after they ate at Mārayya's house and said, "Basava! Are there any other devotees who are equal to Mārayya? All the fine food in your house does not measure up to the gruel we have eaten in his house. Mārayya does not even seem to think about all the hard labor it has taken to provide it. Furthermore, he makes no distinction between one day and another, but simply brings a measure of grain and with that he satisfies the whole host of jaṅgamas. Isn't it amazing? Hurray for Moḷiga Mārayya! Hurray for the great devotee!"

Basava was amazed by the way they sang Mārayya's praises. So he donned a disguise and went to see Moḷiga Mārayya's wife. There he gracefully fell prostrate and said, "I seek refuge!"

The woman responded, "I seek refuge," and brought water to wash his feet. But Basava, fearing that he might be recognized, refused to accept her worship. Instead, he said, "Mother, my liṅga is hungry. Feed it quickly."

He ate quickly, looked around for a place, and then stuck two thousand māḍas in two bags under a plate. Again asking for refuge, he received the offering of the liṅga. Having done so, he felt very happy with himself, like a poor man who has just found a treasure. Tears of joy flowed down his cheeks, and he thought, "Isn't this the medicine that is needed to cure the grief of birth? Isn't this the full harvest of great devotion? Isn't this the all-giving tree of my native place? Isn't this real liberation?"

Elated, when he had enjoyed the offering of the liṅga, and as he stood in the courtyard of the house, he thought to himself, "Just to look at this house washes away all sins. If a person crosses the threshold of this house, he is fulfilled. The animals who live in this area are indeed fortunate. If a person but smears a bit of dust from this house on his forehead, won't he gain devotion? A person need do no more than eat a little food or even drink a handful of rice-washing water[20] in this house to have all his sins destroyed." With these thoughts in his mind, Basava went on his way, feeling happy. That afternoon, Mārayya, who enjoyed the never-ending pleasure of meditating on Śiva, came and threw his bundle of firewood on the doorstep. As soon as he arrived, his wife came out to meet him and washed his feet. She received him as a jaṅgama and fed him a liṅga meal. When she had done so, he spotted the bags of māḍas that Basava had hidden under the plate, and he asked his wife, "Where did this money come from? Who has been here today?"

"Lord, a man came and ate here today. I do not know what happened after that. He left right away," she told him.

"No doubt it was Basava! Surely, it is only fair that a rich devotee should take care of a poor one. He must be a great patron indeed. And our life will no doubt proceed much more smoothly now. Well, isn't that nice? It would have been enough if he had just come, treating us like his own children. But we have enough for today from the work our liṅga has given to us," he said.

And at once he gave the money, one bag each, to two jaṅgamas and bowed down to them. He then washed the feet of all the host of jaṅgamas and devotedly sprinkled the water on the firewood. It became gold. With a light heart he then cut it up into one thousand māḍa-weight pieces. To each of the jaṅgamas he bowed down and gave a nugget of gold.

Completely amazed, the jaṅgamas went to Basava and reported what had happened. "Is there any other devotee in any of the worlds who has the supreme devotion, the dedication to duty, and the generosity of Moḷiga Mārayya?" they praised.

Basava was shaken. He went to Mārayya, bowed down, and said, "Protect me, O incomparable one."

"Father! Father! Why do you talk like that? In what way are you deserving of blame? You are the life breath of the poor devotees. Is there another devotee in the whole world who is your equal? Devotees like ourselves only survive through your generosity. Isn't that right? We never even heard of money bags until you came along. And it is only because of you that we have had a chance to see them now.

"Hurray for the rich man! Hurray for the merciful one! Hurray for the generous giver! Hurray for the famous lord! Do you actually give every devotee as much as you gave me? We are Maḍivālu Mācayya's grandchildren.[21] Please guide us and never leave us. What more can we say?" said Mārayya, ridiculing him in many different ways.

Basava felt very bad and said, "Does the golden mountain care about the lowliness of a crow? Does the philosopher's stone care about the baseness of iron? You have superior qualities, and I have inferior qualities. Is there even one good quality in me? Is vedic chanting heard in the untouchable colony? Are vessels of copper found in the potter's kiln?[22] Will a lotus sprout in a fire pit? But why try to change all this? I have lost my senses, and you must protect me. You are the merciful one, Saṅgayyadeva!"[23] Then he approached Mārayya's lotus feet, praised him, and asked him for refuge.

When Basava came to his feet seeking refuge, Mārayya raised him up, embraced him, floated him on the ocean of his compassion, and gave him advice in words that were soft and sweet. Again, Basava Rāja bowed down to Mārayya, who then continued on in his devotion as before.

Those who read or hear the story of Moḷiga Mārayya will gain eternal grace, a pure heart, and true bliss.

The Story of Kannada Brahmayya

There was another devotee, named Kannada Brahmayya,[24] who was capable of humbling the pride of everyday life. He loved jaṅgamas and offered them his life, body, and money. He was of admirable character. With his true devotion and his pure thoughts, he was an image of the mobile liṅga. He followed the tradition of heroic vows; he was a supreme worshiper of jaṅgamas; he was involved with pure, eternal devotion.

He had a knife,[25] a pick, a red cloth, a pair of scissors, some sand, some yellow rice, a ball with spikes on it, a black cloak, a belt for girding up his loins, magical mascara, a sharp weapon, a shepherd's crook, thin-soled sandals, a pipe, escape ashes, throwing stones, a dog silencer, a hook, a boring instrument, and a noose. On nights when the darkness was so thick it could not be pierced with a needle, he crept silently up to the porches of houses. Depending upon the individual situation, he would make a hole at the latch, at the threshold, in the wall, or under the foundation.

Upon entering a house he always looked about. If it turned out to be a devotee's house, he would light a lamp, fall on the occupants' lotus feet, waken them, take prasāda and water from their feet, and say, "My name is Brahmaḍu, and I am a servant in the houses of the true śaraṇas who seek refuge." Then he would leave. If, on the other hand, it turned out to be the house of a nondevotee, he would quickly rifle everything that they had, bring it back, and use it in serving the jaṅgamas.

While he was thus engaged one day, many jaṅgamas came. With a total disregard for the fact that it was broad daylight, he said, "I will bore a hole under the king's house and bring back a lot of money right away."

On his way, Basava saw him in the street and fell prostrate on the earth. To this Kannada Brahmayya responded, "Basava, get yourself a knife and a pick and come along. We have a hole to bore. There is no other way for me to get enough money; show me Bijjala's treasury!"

True to his vow never to talk back, Basava did not question whether it was proper, but agreed to go along with Kannada Brahmayya. After securing burglary tools for himself, he followed him as his assistant, entered the building, and showed off the treasury. When he bored a hole beside the bolt, all the borings turned into pure, shining gold. Then, having made his entrance, he removed all the jewels from the trunks. The guards went and reported to the king what had happened.

"At last I have caught Basava in the act," said the king, raging and chewing his lip in a fury. "So how am I to recognize him as a devotee of Śiva? I gave him a prominent place in my court; I always showed him respect; and I never treated him like a youth. But now he has forced an entrance in the middle of the day! How did he escape with his life? If he had only asked, I would have given him all the money he needed. He had my confidence! Now he goes and does a thing like this, and who knows what he will do next."

With eyes flaming, he went and saw gold around the hole where the entry had been made. When he had recovered a little from his astonishment and gotten control of his anger, the king said, "What is the meaning of this pile of gold? What about the thief? And what is the meaning of this hole? Minister Basava, tell me what you are up to."

Then Basava spoke these words to the king: "There is a devotee named Kannada Brahmayya who is a brave manifestation of the liṅga. Even the lord himself is not capable of praising the power of this man. The toes of his blessed feet support the all-giving tree. His ambrosial gaze is the birthplace of a herd of all-giving diamonds. The touch of his fingers is a quarry of philosopher's stones. Wherever his feet tread is the land of liberation. His compassion is ambrosia. His anger brings on the annihilation of everything. His mercy is heaven. Invisibility and the other yogic powers are at his command. In spite of his support from the liṅga, he never touches any money except that which he gets from his avowed profession of housebreaking. It makes no sense to question whether this bad path could be devotion.

"His path is good and true, and I will tell you why. The Pāṇḍavas lost their kingdom through gambling, but Mūrkha gained Śiva[26] through gambling. Rāma lost his wife when he went hunting; but Kannappa[27] merged with the lord of the universe when he went hunting. Kings fall when they get involved with other women; but Nambi[28] gained Hara by getting involved with other women. Māṇḍavya was impaled[29] for killing; but Caṇḍa[30] got liberation for killing. Brahma lost his place on earth because he lied,[31] but Ciṙutŏṇḍa lied and was taken[32] in his body to Śiva's abode. Śūdraka was dismembered because he was a sheep stealer; but he joined Black Throat's gaṇas by being a highwayman. It is said that kings go to hell when their reigns are over,[33] but Cerama[34] and Coḍa[35] gained liberation after their reigns. As you can see, there is no bad path. Hara says that if it is done for Śiva "nondharma becomes dharma."

But why talk of all these things? What is more important than all of these is the behavior of Kannada Brahmayya. He never goes out on a job except when a jaṅgama comes. And then he goes fearlessly and does not pay any attention to whether it is day or night. If it turns out to be a Śaiva devotee's house, he tells them his name, bows, and leaves them alone. But when it comes to other people's houses, he takes everything that they have. He enters the houses of greedy people who are distant from both this world and the transcendent, and makes their lives purposeful. In him the primal man has been born. It is indeed remarkable.

"Whatever he touches, the places he digs, the heights he scales, and the tools he holds, all turn to gold. Except to protect you, what does Brahmayya want with your money? Count your money! Then we will have a look at the treasury records and see if there is not more than there was before." And with that Basava read the treasury account to the king's great astonishment.

Meanwhile, Brahmayya went home, and his wife came eagerly out to meet him. She bowed to his feet and took his burglary tools and the money that he had brought. Brahmayya shone with devotion and fell prostrate before the assembled jaṅgamas. The woman prepared the five kinds of foods and other superb rice dishes and drinks and served them to the assembled devotees. Floating on the nectar ocean of their kindness, she gave them much money, grain, clothing, vehicles, and ornaments.

Kannada Brahmayya himself enjoyed the kindness proffered by the jaṅgamas and went on living as before with commendable devotion and nobility. Those who hear, read, or spread the great story of Kannada Brahmayya will instantly receive the ambrosia of Śiva's grace, along with everything else that they want.

The Story of Musiḍi Cauḍayya

Musiḍi Cauḍayya,[36] whose deeds were incomparable, was one of the gaṇas of Three Eyes. He was a mirror for the devotees; he moved on the path that is based on agreeable vows; he converted failure into success; he had the valor resulting from unfailing truth; he was wise; he had destroyed the cycle of birth and death; he kept his distance from the ignorant; he was fearless; he was an ocean of courage; he was born for a purpose; his looks reflected divinity and compassion; he was equally capable of giving curses and boons; his actions were not limited by prescriptions and prohibitions; he was very famous; he was an embodiment of the mobile liṅga that can see both the visible and the invisible; he was the support of the devotees who wore the sacred ashes; and he was the equal of the incomparable Vīrabhadra.

Cauḍayya had made a solemn vow to revive dead devotees, stud bulls, and ascetics. He had also made a vow to suppress any sea or river that blocked his path as he walked along. Furthermore, he had vowed never to fail to perform his devotional rituals.

This Cauḍayya lived the life of a devotee in a place called Musiḍi. When he heard of Basava's devotion, good fortune, and power, he naturally wanted to see him for himself. To this end, he and some devotees were marching along when they came to a forest that was so thick that a handful of sand cast upon it would not hit the ground. In the forest were *musiḍi*[37] trees heavy with ripe fruit that shone like golden mountains.

"Come on, let's eat the musiḍi fruit; our liṅgas will like it," said the host of devotees.

Hearing this, Cauḍayya smiled, leaned his sword against a nearby musiḍi tree, and said, "Eat, my lord!"

With that, all the host of devotees came, offered the fruit to Śiva, and ate their fill. Then, the devotees made fun of him and said that his name, Musiḍi Cauḍayya, would henceforth be meaningful.

Cauḍayya continued happily on his way to Kaḷyāṇa. Basava learnt from Saṅgameśvara of Cauḍayya's arrival, met him, fell prostrate on the earth, accompanied him, and tended to his every need. In fact, he worshiped Musiḍi Cauḍayya every day just as he worshiped Saṅgameśvara. And, of course, Musiḍi Cauḍayya enjoyed himself in the devotional climate of Kaḷyāṇa.

One day Cauḍayya received the blessings of the elders to get married. He set out to go to the bride's house for the wedding. As he passed through the city along the king's road, in the middle of the devotees, he suddenly saw the corpse of an ascetic being carried along through the sky on a bier.

"Is it right for us to proceed any further without being blessed by this great ascetic? As for me, I do not want to attend the wedding unless this sage comes with me. Wait!" said he.

Then, taking the sword in his hand by the hilt, he brandished it, displayed the tip, cried aloud, approached the corpse, and said, "O great man, I seek refuge! I seek refuge! I seek refuge!"

"Bless you! Bless you! Bless you!"[38] the corpse responded.

"Get down! Get down, you mendicant! Now that I have seen you, how can I help but laugh at you for being up there? Your proper vehicle is the bull. Why are you being carried by human beings? Don't you think people will laugh at you?" he said. And with that, he grabbed the ascetic's foot and dragged him down.

The ascetic was overjoyed to get down to the ground, and smiling affectionately, he embraced Musiḍi Cauḍayya. As for the amazed onlookers, they praised Cauḍayya as the original form of truth while the ascetic accompanied him to the wedding.

As they went along, at the outskirts of that village, they came to some cowherds who were playing a game near a banyan tree. The herdsmen had first chosen sides and paired up. They stood their ground and then ran and began a mock fight among themselves.

"We have taken a vow on the Lord of Cattle[39] that the Basava banyan tree will be home base for us," said one of them.

Now it happened that as he walked along under the trees, Cauḍayya heard these words and went up to one of the cattle herdsmen and asked, "What do you mean by calling this the Basava banyan tree?"

An old cowherd explained: "I happen to know a little something about this Basava tree. When we were just little kids, my grandfather told me a story that he had heard from his grandfather. Two stud bulls got enraged with each other and fought here for seven days straight. The entire ground was covered with a flood of blood. Finally, one of the bulls weakened and died. It was buried right here where it fell, and from it this banyan tree sprang up. Because of that, this came to be known as the Basava banyan. But what is even more surprising is this: if you bite into the fruit, it is like meat; if you cut the tree, the sap is like blood. Who ever heard of a banyan tree with red sap? If you do not believe me, come along, and I will show you."

"This is just an old story," said Cauḍayya's companions, and started to move off.

"I don't care if it is old or new. Once I hear about the death of a bull, how can I go on to my wedding without that bull leading the procession? How can you expect me to go on without bringing the bull back to life?" said Cauḍayya. And with that he gave a great roar and an affectionate cry: "Come out! Come out, King of Bulls!" Then he ran up to the tree and laid his blade against it.

The bull shook; the earth cracked open; the banyan tree and its roots trembled violently; clods of earth flew up into the air. Everybody was amazed.

Up rose the bull. He bounded up out of the earth, stood erect and looked about, snorted and bellowed, swished his tail, pawed the earth, dug up the soil with his horns, charged at shadows, bounded up to the sky, drew himself up, ran swiftly, bounced about, sniffed at the banyan tree and worried it, raised his head to the sky, shat a little, gored angrily with his horns, snorted and kicked his hooves, bounded to and fro, pulled up mouthfuls of grass, threw back his head and licked himself, sprang to battle; dipped, swung, and hooked with his horns; made menacing noises, charged toward the crowd, and sniffed and snorted. He saw Cauḍayya and was pleased, and he followed the ascetic wherever he went.

The bull, the husband of the cows, wore a garland, turmeric rice, sweet-smelling ointments, beautiful bells, tiny jingling bells, and ankle bracelets.

Joyfully, Musiḍi Cauḍayya threw his arms around the bull's neck and embraced him. Then he washed his hooves, offered him flowers, incense, lamps, and other things. He also served him enough clarified butter and milk to fill his stomach.

"Let's go! Let's go, Nandi! If you do not come along, the wedding cannot go on," said Cauḍayya.

At this, all the people were astonished, and the devotees went on praising him and rejoicing. In front of everybody else went the ascetic. But even before him went the bull, rejoicing as he walked along.

After some time they came to the flooding Hiddora River, which was welling up to the sky and threatening to engulf the earth. Proudly Cauḍayya stamped the earth and stood still.

"Don't you remember how a sage once drank all the oceans from the palm of his hand?[40] Didn't Dāsayya, the great devotee, reject a bhavi's boat and walk over you? When Gaṅgeśvara Masanayya was meditating on Śiva in your riverbed, wasn't it you who were afraid to flow over him and divided yourself into two streams? O wicked river, why do you go on flooding? Recede and make a path for us," said Cauḍayya, and taking the hilt of his sword in his hand, he brandished it.

At once the river gave way and piled up into mountains of water that rolled up to the heavens as if on their way to hear from the Gaṅga of the sky[41] about devotion to Hara. The water receded quickly from the path as if retreating to the underworld for fear of Musiḍi Cauḍayya, and in the middle only smooth earth remained.

"Come on! Come on!" said Musiḍi Cauḍayya. "They say that you cannot cut water in two, but that is obviously not true."

As he walked forward, the matchless host of devotees yelled and leapt into the air and danced. Now and then they cried out and roared aloud. They turned cartwheels, they rose up and ran forward while the ascetic and the bull walked in front.

Cauḍayya stood on the opposite bank with a smile on his face. "You were flooding the entire world, but now your outrage has been checked, and you are not so exuberant," he said.

In company with the devotees, he went happily on his way, and feeling very satisfied, he performed all the wedding rituals to the last one. Received by the devotees, he returned to the city of Kalyāṇa. There, as he went through the streets, he was accompanied by the ascetic and the stud bull.

All the people were amazed. While the sky was full of victory cries, a young woman hurried up, fell prostrate on the earth, and touched Cauḍayya's feet with her forehead. At once he blessed her, saying, "May you live for a hundred years."[42] Then he went back to his own house and remained there as usual.

As for the girl, she died the very next day. Her parents wept and brought her body to Cauḍayya. They bowed down to him and said, "Yesterday this girl bowed down and placed her head on your feet. Today she is dead. Has your blessing gone away?"

When they kept on sobbing and would not get up from his feet, he said, "Get back! Get back! Don't stand in the road and weep! Stand back!" He had them set the bier on the ground, and with his power overflowing, he struck the body gently with his hand.

It is said that those who give blessings cannot give years. But Cauḍayya proved this saying false. First, he brandished his sharp sword. Then, while everyone was watching, he called the girl by name and asked her to get up.

The ropes with which she was tied snapped, and she looked startled, as if she had just been suddenly awakened from a deep sleep. After looking around with amazement, she fell prostrate before Cauḍayya.

Meanwhile, her mother and father bowed down with joyful hearts and said, "Master Musiḍi Cauḍayya! Incomparable hero! How can we thank you enough? Is there any way we can repay you for restoring her life? Accept us as your slaves and help us to dry up the ocean of worldly life."

According to their wishes, he gave the three of them prāṇa liṅgas for their bodies. Furthermore, leaving aside the time that each of them had already lived, he granted a hundred more years of life to each one.

"Is it possible for anyone to give the gift of life? Even Moon Wearer himself is incapable of that. But when she was dead, Musiḍi Cauḍayya restored her to life. This is amazing! This is truly amazing!" said the people.

Cauḍayya walked naturally in unity with the liṅga. But base-minded people of other faiths grew envious of the name that he had acquired and thought, "Whenever he sees dead bulls, sages, and Śaiva priests, he brings them back to life. Why not give him a little test?"

With evil intent, they stuffed a gunny sack so that it looked like a man. Then they covered it with ashes and decorated it with rudrākṣa beads. They also gave it a sacred thread and matted hair. Finally, they gave it sandals and a torn loincloth. When they were finished, they tossed it against an abandoned temple and went off as if they knew nothing about the whole thing.

Then they loitered in the market scoffing, "Alas! We have seen the corpse of an ascetic by the temple. No doubt he had no money for food, clothing, charities, and savings. He must have been a worthless destitute, and that is why no devotees have gathered around. It is too bad, but then nobody lives forever! Yet, it is a desolate place. How can we stand by and let something like this happen? Let's at least give the body a charity cremation," they said.

So they constructed a bier and called a few Śaiva priests and ascetics and said they had no idea how long the body had been there and, besides, it was stinking. At this juncture, the rogues themselves put the artificial rotten corpse on the bier and carried it in front of the house where Cauḍayya lived. By the time they got there, they were laughing and carrying on.

But when they were still a short distance away, Caudayya saw the corpse in the bier and knew at once that it was a fake. Completely delighted with himself, he looked at them with a smile and said, "When they are angry, they can destroy the entire universe. And when they want to, they can build it up again. When you think about the power of Kāma Killer's devotees, this is no big thing. Watch, I am going to give a body and life breath to this dummy."

With his mind on the feet of Mṛḍa's devotees, Cauḍayya went up to the corpse and brandished his sword. First, he touched it with the tip. Then he went closer as it lay in its bier and extended his hand.

"Get up! Get up, ascetic!" he called. That is all that it took. With that, it became a living being and stood up and praised him. "You are Hara! You are the true guru! Kindly give me permission to carry your sandals. Your compassion is the womb out of which I was born. I know nothing else."

Cauḍayya first associated the ascetic with a liṅga,[43] and then he became enraged with those who had perpetrated the falsehood, and considered slaying every one of them. The people of the other religions were terribly afraid. They fell prostrate on the earth and said, "O Musiḍi Cauḍayya, you are our preceptor! Lord, you are our protector, our refuge, and our patron! It is as such that we regard you. We are ignorant fools. Forgive us our shortcomings and make us capable of doing good works, O leader of the good people."

When they begged for assurance of pardon, the merciful one, the protector of the distressed, the best of good men, Cauḍayya, removed all their old religious marks and made them accept the Śaiva creed. Then Musiḍi Cauḍayya happily went on living as he had before.

Whoever hears, copies, or reads the incomparable story of Musiḍi Cauḍayya will gain true devotion, the grace of Kāma Killer, and the pleasure of being a pramatha.

The Story of Suriya Cauḍarasu

Suriya Cauḍarasu was a gem of a man who had been born for a purpose. He knew the nature of the liṅga; he loved the liṅga; he enjoyed the bliss that comes from association with the liṅga; he majestically adhered to the heroic path; his mind was steadfastly associated with the secret liṅga; he enjoyed the blessings of both kinds of liṅgas; he was worshiped by all three worlds; his fame was great; his conscience was clean; his body and his mind were completely in harmony with each other; he was pure and virtuous; he was kindly; he had lost his fear of the cycle of life; he followed the principles that are associated with great character; he was involved with the eight kinds of devotion; he had escaped the influence of the body; he cared nothing for the world of illusion.

Cauḍarasu lived in Kaḷyāṇa, and he always worshiped the assembly of jaṅgamas three times every day with his mind fixed firmly on his guru. He served them rice pudding and the five kinds of eatables. And he gave them every kind of delicious food and drink. As he served them and bowed to them with hands folded on his head, he said, "Śruti always says that the lord receives tastes on the tip of the devotee's tongue.[44] Therefore, O lord, take on the form of a jaṅgama and eat this food."

While the jaṅgama sat and ate, he stood and performed the liṅga worship. Before the bath water was ready, his tears of bliss flowed over the transcendent god. Before the fresh flowers were ready for the worship, his lotus heart was fixed on Moon Wearer. Before the incense, the fragrance of his inner consciousness spread over Dhūrjaṭi.[45] Before the wave offering, the light of his soul lit up Malahara. Before the food was ready, his life was prepared to be offered to Īśvara. In this way, he joyfully worshiped the liṅga.

Very slowly he ceased to be conscious of his body. As he watched the auspicious liṅga, he was in a state of bliss. As he drank the ambrosia of Abhava, he slumped down. He grew faint as he sang the beautiful words. He floated on the ocean of comfort and stability. His inner and outer minds were immersed in his prāṇa liṅga. This was his regular form of worship.

When it was time to make an offering to the liṅga, he would draw his prāṇa liṅga from out of his body as he would draw the sword from its sheath and set it up on the side. As if feeding jaṅgamas, he offered all the foods on his plate to his prāṇa liṅga, morsel by morsel. Morsel by morsel, Parameśvara himself personally took the food and ate it. Three times a day Cauḍarasu happily ate both the remains of the offering to the prāṇa liṅga and the remains of the offering to jaṅgamas.

People were saying, "Every day King Karikāla Coḍa[46] served Hara three hundred and sixty bags of well-cleaned, selected, and aged rice. With it he served dishes of vegetables that contained thirty measures of black pepper. But although he offered them, Īśvara did not really eat them. And so one day when Karikāla Coḍa had served the food to Śiva, he held his sword in his hand and stood outside the gate. Again and again he heard the sounds of Śiva feasting.

"We have also heard the story of Mādara Cĕnnayya. They say that that famous man once used his own tongue as a bowl to offer leftover gruel to Śiva.

"In Dākṣārāma, Vīracoḍavva shivered as she ate because the food was too salty. Not wanting any more of it, she sent it to Śiva along with a maidservant who said, 'My elder sister has sent this food to you. Please eat it.' Bhīmeśa[47] then reached out his hand, took the food from the woman's hand, ate it, and while everyone was watching, threw the bowl outside the temple.

"These are all stories we have heard before, but today we have seen it for ourselves. We have seen Forehead Eye eating morsels of food from Cauḍarasu's hands here in the capital." And they praised Suriya Cauḍarasu immensely while he lived in great happiness.

Whoever hears, reads, or is fond of the story of Suriya Cauḍarasu will enjoy the natural mobile liṅga, fame, compassion, pure character, personal pleasure, endless bliss, and the respectable power of true devotion.

The Story of Tĕlugu Jŏmmayya

Tĕlugu Jŏmmayya[48] was a devotee of Malahara who had destroyed the three sins. He had unswerving devotion; he had compassion for all living beings; his mind was free of distinctions between sin and virtue; he was responsible for many meritorious deeds; he was blissful and evolved; he had developed a clear mind and the ability to focus his attention on the Śaiva practice; he was a pure and famous hero; he was concerned with the welfare of the world, but he was free of the world; his mind was always focused on Śiva's feet; he was Rudra who took the form of a hunter in the kali age; he was courageous; he was always attentive; he was fulfilled in his obedience and devotion to Śiva; he was a purifier of the world.

He worshiped the liṅga. He longed to feed jaṅgamas. And he lived in the city of Kalyāṇa and enjoyed great fame.

Meanwhile, here in Śrīśailam, there was another man named Śivānanda who constantly meditated on Śiva. Lost in otherworldly bliss, he had become unconscious like a piece of wood and remained in a state of *samādhi*[49] in a place near a rivulet. His toenails grew into the earth like the roots of a tree. At the same time, his fingernails grew up into the air like white vines. Unkempt hair covered his body and the overall effect was a black mountain. But still his disciple continued to serve him with unswerving devotion, and humbly remained there living on roots and bulbs.

One day some gandharva women and their husbands were passing by on an excursion. "What is this black thing covered with white vines?" they wondered. "From a distance it looks like a rock. But why would a rock have vines growing on it? It may, in fact, be a tree, but if so, where are the leaves? Maybe it is an old bear that has become immobilized." And they examined it closely.

When the disciple saw the piercing looks of the women and men, he became hard and angry and cursed them with these words: "Can't you see? He is a great yogi. He is experiencing the bliss of union with the transcendent. How can you think such things about him? You fools! Since you mistook him for an animal, you yourselves will be reborn as animals."

Being very frightened, they at once fell prostrate and cried, "Alas! Please forgive us! It is true that we did not see clearly, but we had no intention of making fun of him. Nevertheless, we were ignorant, and we must reap the fruits of our action. But what is the use of talking about that anymore? How and when are we going to be released from this curse? Won't you have mercy on us, O great man? Won't you kindly forgive us our faults?"

"Once uttered, a curse is inevitable; it cannot be taken back. You will be born as animals in the forests around the city of Kaḷyāṇa. But there is a devotee of Śiva named Tĕlugu Jŏmmayya who is the purifier of the world. If you are killed at the hand of that form of the liṅga, you will gain what you seek, liberation from the curse. By simply dying at his hand, you will gain eternal liberation."

As soon as he had spoken, the gandharvas, along with the same husbands that they had before, were born as animals in the vicinity of Kaḷyāṇa in the middle of a forest. One day they were waiting for Tĕlugu Jŏmmayya to come when he entered the forest to gather leaves. When he did so, the animals realized at once that it was he and gathered around him crying out.

They actually stopped him and would not let him go on while one of them said, "Merciful one, unless you kill us with your own hands, we will not be liberated from this curse. O benefactor of the world, if only for the sake of following your normal routine, why don't you hunt us? We have been cursed because of something we once did when we were gandharvas."

After telling him the whole story, they went on. "You are the only one who can liberate us from the curse. As soon as you kill us, a divine vehicle will come and publicly transport us to Kailāsa. In fact, the sage's curse may turn out to be more of a blessing for us. The reason is that we used to live among the gandharvas, but now we will die at your hands and gain a blissful state. Please make us come alive."

When he heard their supplication, the imperishable one inquired into the matter with his divine insight and found that what they said was true. That peerless śaraṇa turned back, and having collected enough leaves for the purpose, he camouflaged himself with a green turban and clothing. With a remarkable bow and arrows in his hand, he entered the forest, which was like Indra's pleasure grove, along with a band of hunters and fierce hunting dogs that were capable of defeating lions.

When the sinless Jŏmmayya entered the forest, all the animals were elated and gathered around him. The dogs broke their leashes and, quick as thought, they attacked the unfortunate beasts and set out to destroy them. But the animals avoided the dogs. Instead, they jumped in front of Jŏmmayya's arrows and chose to face them head on. And no sooner did they die at the hands of Jŏmmayya than they were liberated from their curse. Being liberated, they immediately became gandharvas again, and fell prostrate at his feet and sang his praises. Because they died at his hands, they gained vast merit and went at once to Śiva's world in a pure, golden, divine vehicle.

They escaped the fierce dogs and the flying arrows, but they died at the hands of Jŏmmayya. Isn't it remarkable how they had their animal forms destroyed, bowed down, became gandharvas, and went off in golden vehicles?

The hunters who had accompanied Jŏmmayya were surprised and said, "The dogs were on that side; we were on this side. Have our arrows ever missed before? Just as they were about to strike home, they went astray. When have animals ever been transported through the sky in a procession of golden chariots? Who actually inhabited these mortal animal bodies? Jŏmmayya alone knows the answers. He is the Rudra of this world. He is a peerless man who was born for a purpose."

And Jŏmmayya continued to hunt, killing all the animals in the area and sending them to Śiva's city.

One day the king of Kaḷyāṇa and his people came out to see what was happening. The assembly of devotees also came along. When they saw Jŏmmayya, they praised him and marveled at him.

"With his guru's meditation as his arrow, he has killed the lion of life and death. With the sight of the devotees as his mace, he has slain the spotted deer of past karma. With the guru's command as sword and spear, he has lanced the tiger of previous lives. With knowledge as a sharp knife in his hand, he has dismembered the boar of ignorance. With devotion as his lance, he has destroyed the gayal of illusion. With the Śaiva tradition as his ax, he has chopped up the leopard of the Jain path. With grace as his bow, he has killed the black bucks of deluded senses. With skilled speech as his harpoon, he has blinded the bear of the three kinds of desires. With Hara's might as his weapon, he has killed the beasts of the other religions. When a mighty hunter is capable of killing such animals, is it any big matter for him to kill these ordinary beasts? Even creatures that die when Jŏmmayya walks gain liberation. Why is it surprising if those he kills go to Śiva's city?" said Basava, enthusiastically praising him.

And in the famous city of Kaḷyāṇa, Jŏmmayya remained an object of wonder and a man of good character.

Whoever happened to hear the pure story of Tĕlugu Jŏmmayya and whoever reads it with understanding will be anointed as a ruler, will shine forth, and will gain the worshipful empire of the liṅga.

You wear the honey that flows freely from the lotus feet of the jaṅgamas on your head! Your fame is white like Sarasvati, lotuses, pearls, snow, stars, and ambrosia! Your words are truthful and yet sweet to the ears! Your chest shines with ashes and rudrākṣa beads! Your name is Saṅga! Your life breaths are pure and well balanced! Your mind is constantly absorbed in the liṅga!

This is the work of the good poet and fortunate soul Pālkuriki Somanātha, who enjoys the fragrance of the lotus feet of the innumerable māheśvaras and who is immersed in the ambrosial ocean of pleasure that is derived from the blessings of the jaṅgama liṅga. It has benefited greatly from the poetic spirit graciously bestowed by Karasthali Viśvanātha.

This is the fifth chapter of the story that is known as the *Basava Purāṇa.*

CHAPTER VI

O Saṅga, you take pleasure in the flood of the devotees' ambrosial compassion.

The Story of Ekānta Rāmayya

There was a vociferous devotee named Ekānta Rāmayya.[1] He was a form of Black Throat. He was tranquil and austere. He had destroyed the Jains. He was extraordinarily courageous. He defended the Śaivas. He was an incarnation of the preeminent Vīrabhadra himself. He was not influenced by his senses. He regarded bhavis as untouchables. He was fearless. He knew the fullness of the liṅga and constantly kept his attention on it. He possessed the dignity of the liṅga. His fame was spotless. His name was linked with total devotion. His presence sanctified the world of men. The inhabitants of the three worlds bowed down to him. He had a wealth of great and heroic qualities. He always worshiped Śiva at the appropriate times. And when he finished worshiping, he proceeded to the world of the pramathas and bowed down to Vīraka, Vīrabhadra, and the other gaṇas. He praised their character. He swam in the blissful ocean of devotion to Śiva. Then he regularly returned to the earth. And he did this three times every day.

When the ocean of Basava's rich devotion spread out in all directions and seemed to be reaching the sky, this pure man wanted to see him. So he came in disguise[2] to see Basava.

While Ekānta Rāmayya was walking alone in the capital, a Jain walked straight into the Śaiva temple without even taking off his sandals. Rāmayya was there at the time, and he reproached him angrily: "What is the meaning of this? It is a sin! Hey, you worthless Jain, don't you know that it is wrong to enter Moon Wearer's house with sandals on your feet? Come and throw your sandals aside and fall prostrate before Mṛḍa. If you do not, you are going to feel the effects of Antaka's[3] terrifying rod. And if you decide to stay here with your sandals on—have no doubt about it—I will dismember you joint by joint."

"Who are you to get so upset? Do you think you are the only guardian of the temples of Three Eyes? Hey, devotee, who do you think I am that I should be afraid of the likes of you? The vasadi[4] is the only temple, and Jina is the supreme deity. Either keep your mouth shut or cut off your head and let Malahara give it back to you! When I have seen you do that, then I will know that you are the only devotee, and he is the only god," he challenged.

"It would not be any problem just to kill this man, but what is more important is that I show the strength of my devotion. So I will give my head and get it back. Then I will decapitate the Jain path," thought Ekānta Rāmayya.

And with the strength of his devotion to Poison Throat, he said, "O dissenter, if you think that it is impossible to give one's head and get it back, listen to the power of Śaiva devotees.

"There was once a devotee named Jambūrmahākāḷa. Everyone was amazed when he gave his head to Abhava and got it back.

"There was another devotee in this city named Govinda Bhaṭṭāraka. He claimed that it was all wrong to take back a head that had been offered to Śiva. So he worshiped Black Throat with his severed head, and three days later he got another one.

"Another devotee named Mŏṙaṭada Vaṅkayya ridiculed the whole story. He questioned whether Three Eyes might have been absent or dead, since he took three days to do something about it. So he cut off his head and grew another. And again he cut off his head and grew another. He cut off head after head, but his devotion never faltered. No sooner did he remove one head than he wore another in its place. When he cut off the head that he wore, a new head sprouted up. And as the head that sprouted developed, a new head emerged from within his body.

"Though he cut off his head, his head was not gone. He never lost anything; he just grew himself a new head. As one head fell onto Hara he grew another. One head winked its eye. Another head shook as if to say no! One head coolly wandered around in front of Śiva. One head was on top of him. One head kept motioning. One head kept moving. One head roared. One head said, 'Yes, yes!' One head chuckled. One head lurked around. One head came running. One head attacked. One head gently merged with Śiva. One head shone with a fiery third eye. Another head ate fire and stayed where it was. One head yelled. Another head showed its delight. One head grumbled when it fell down with a thump. One head flicked its tongue in excitement. One head made fun of Śūli. One head jumped up and down. One head bowed. One head hid from him. One head praised. One head smiled. One head uttered condemnations. One head gave blessings. One head sought refuge. One head gave victory cries. One head joked around. One head gave a recitation. One head struggled. One head fought. One head mounted an assault. One head said, 'Hurray!' One head sang a song. One head said, 'You coward,' and attacked Śiva. Each behaving in its own way, the heads enthusiastically engulfed Īśvara, and piled up in heaps until they filled the temple to the bursting point.

"Kāma Killer was amazed. 'Hey, Vaṅkayya! I cannot breathe,' he said. 'Is it proper to fight with me even after I have surrendered? I am no match for your heroic devotion.' Admitting defeat, the God of gods reached out his hand to Vaṅkayya. And he lovingly absorbed all the heads into the liṅga. As for the people, they were shaken, but that did not stop them from praising him.

"Vaṅkayya not only opposed Śiva; he defeated him. In fact, there are a great many devotees of this type. Isn't that enough for you sinners? Aren't you familiar with the power of these Śaiva devotees who have destroyed your whole city?

The Story of Tirunāvakariśa

"In Tirunāvalūru there was a Jain guru, a teacher of the Jina sect, known as Tirunāvakariśa.[5] One day he developed a terrible pain in his stomach and began moaning and rolling on the ground. It was so bad that he thought he was going to die. At that point, his sister looked at him and said, 'O you impure-bodied man, all your hocus-pocus mantras and tantras are not going to relieve you of your pain. If you want to go on living, you will have to get permission from the devotees and learn Kāma Killer's divine mantra. If you do that, you will soon be free of disease and get what you want.'

"When the Jain heard this, he swore that he would become a devotee.

"So the woman put her thoughts on the devotees of the god who destroyed the three cities. And she applied ash to his body along with the divine, five-syllabled mantra. She also drove off the evil with a wave of the hand. And at once the stomach pains left him.

"Tirunāvakariśa was amazed and fell prostrate before the lady. 'O woman, I owe my life to you. From now on, I will be a devotee.'

"At the command of Viṣṇu's lord, Tirunāvakariśa went to Pagalūru. There he found a sterling guru who, like a lotus that grows in the mud, was living in an untouchable colony.[6] He fell prostrate before the delighted guru, who was eager to make him a devotee of Śiva without further delay. Through the guru's compassionate glances, all the sins of the man's past lives were absolved, and he was crowned with the riches of ashes. The guru also wiped away all the evil lines from Tirunāvakariśa's forehead and anointed his head with the holy water of Śiva. He gave him the purificatory rite that is associated with the liṅga.

"He placed Śiva in his hands. He freed him from involvement with the five elements. Through the ceremony of uniting a liṅga with his body, he sanctified him. Then he removed the ordinary breath from his body and replaced it with the liṅga life breath. With the eternal mantra, he bestowed fame upon him. With the spiritual lamp he purified his soul. He taught him the esoteric Śaiva doctrine that is the source of liberation in a lifetime. He granted him compassion and grace. And he made him a scholar of devotion.

Tirunāvakariśa, who was enraptured by the thought of the transcendent Śiva, fell prostrate on the earth before the assembled devotees of Bhava and ordered the performance of Śaiva celebrations.

"The guru performed all the rituals involving vehicles, clothing, gold ornaments, and more. Through thought, word, and deed, he surrendered to Śiva his body and life breath. He took the sacred vow to use ashes and rudrākṣa as ornaments.

"When they saw this going on, the evil Jains thought, 'He has taken the path of the other religion.'

"They threw him to an elephant, but the mighty elephant did not even touch him. What can an elephant do to a servant of the god who wears an elephant skin?

"They fed him poison, but he ate it and did not die. What can poison do to the servant of the god who conquered poison?

"They threw him into a fire, but the fire was extinguished. What can fire do to a servant of the god who has conquered fire?

"They threw him into water, but it was unable to drown him. What can water do to a servant of the god who has bound the water in his locks?[7]

"When the Jains were unable to kill him by any means whatsoever, they began to be afraid that he would kill them. So those who had been tormenting him asked him for refuge, and he protected them. He wiped out their old marks and gave them rudrākṣa, ashes, and the rest of the five marks. In a rage, he destroyed all the Jain images and wrecked all the Jain vasadis.

"For doing so, Tirunāvakariśa became known as the destroyer of the Jains."

The Story of Iruttāṇḍi

"In Cellattiruvālūru there lived a devotee of Kāma Killer called Iruttāṇḍi,[8] who had been blind since birth. One day he decided to dig a bathing tank for Kāma Killer in front of his temple. He equipped himself with a spade and a basket. Before he started to dig, he drove two stakes and joined them with a strong rope. He then held the rope while he excavated the space between the two stakes.

"When they saw what he was doing, the Jains resolved to stop him and put all kinds of obstacles in his way. But he was undaunted and went on digging as before. Finally they went so far as to cut the rope and throw away the stakes.

"Then Black Throat gave him eyes to see, and he sought out the Jain vasadis and destroyed them. Furthermore, he blinded all the Jains. By this means, Iruttāṇḍi demonstrated the power of our gaṇas."

The Story of Piḷḷa Nāyanāru

"In the city of Śrīkāḷi[9] there was a boy who was born with the characteristics of Kumāra.[10] The family in which he was born were Śaiva brahmins, and he was called Piḷḷa Nāyanāru.

"One day his father carried him to the lakeshore on his shoulders, put him down, and proceeded to take a ritual bath. Just then Śiva and Gauri passed by through the sky in their divine vehicle.

" 'Why, that boy looks just like our son, Kumāra,' said the daughter of the mountain. And as she watched him, her breasts filled with milk.

"She then alighted on the earth, took the boy on her lap, stroked his hair, initiated him into the vows of Śambhu, and made him a devotee of Śiva. After nursing him until he was quite full, Gauri also gave him some milk in a gold cup. She then rejoined Īśvara.

"Then the worthy brahmin, who had been under water all the while, rose up and saw that his son's body was shining with a divine light.

" 'What's this? Who nursed you, and who has given you this golden vessel of milk? Who has been here, and where has she gone? Tell me where she is!' he demanded. And he hit the boy with his sacred thread.

"Half-laughing and half-crying, the boy shed a few tears as the milk dripped from the corners of his mouth. Covering the cup with his hands, he cried, 'Father, why are you hitting me? Listen! The God of gods was going through the sky, and his wife, Uma, came down. The lady who wears diamonds in her crown came down from the one with huge locks of hair. The worthy lady came down from the one who wears the moon on his head. The lady who has two eyes came from the god who has three eyes. The lady with the conch-shaped neck came from the god with the black neck. The woman with sandal paste on her breasts came from the one who has sandal paste on his chest. The woman who wears garlands of precious stones came from the one who wears garlands of serpents. The lady who walks like a swan came from half the body of the god who rides a bull. The mother of the three worlds came from the king of the three worlds. She lovingly nursed me at her breast, and then she squeezed some milk into this gold cup for me. If you look very quickly, you can still see her on her way back to rejoin Black Throat where he is waiting for her.'

"The brahmin was amazed, and he fell prostrate before Uma and Maheśvara. Then he replaced his son on his shoulders and returned home, where he shared his happiness with his wife.

"Because he had nursed at Pārvati's breast, the boy gained omniscience and pure speech, and he went to the temple and worshiped her in a thousand different ways. She responded by giving him golden cymbals, and he began to sing better than either Tumburu or Nārada.

"Meanwhile, Kāḷi's husband gave him white parasols, an endless source of wealth, a pearl bower, and an incomparable gold throne. This was Śiva's blessing.

"The boy mounted a palanquin with golden poles, and when the trumpets announced his arrival, it was like a comet announcing the doom of the other religions. He then set out to visit King Kulottuṅga Coḍa[11] and made him a devotee of Śiva.

"There was a Buddhist guru who was attended by two thousand disciples. Piḷḷa Nāyanāru[12] drove the guru away and converted the two thousand Buddhists into devotees of Śiva.

"In Tirumarakkaḍa he opened the doors of the temple that belonged to Brahmeśa.

"He went to Tirunāvalūru and conquered the Jains who were there.

"He brought back to life a vĕlama who had been bitten by a snake.[13]

"The wife of the king of Madhura[14] invited him to that city. But when he got there, the Jains and Buddhists went before the king and said, 'An arrogant child by the name of Jñānasambandhi has come like an evil comet against the nonvedic religions. O King, you must drive him out of this city!'

" 'Isn't he the Coḍa king's guru? We cannot send him away as easily as all that! You will first have to defeat him in some kind of disputation,' replied the king.

"Eighteen thousand Jains went out to meet him, but they were no match for him in debate. So, in the middle of the night, they went to the house in which he was staying and set it afire. But the god of fire was afraid and stood still before him.

" 'What is the meaning of this? Have you come to burn my house? Don't you remember how Vīrabhadra terrorized you by cutting off your hands and tongue? Well, I am going to cut off what you have left, your nose, and then I am going to send you on your way. Let's test these Jains, or whoever they are. There should not be anything wrong with that. You go enter the body of the king in the form of a high fever and burn him up. Then I will protect you,' said Jñānasambandhi.[15]

"The fire entered the king and consumed his body with a terrible fever. With her husband's permission, Maṅgayakkarasi,[16] the king's wife, called Jñānasambandhi. When he came, she fell prostrate before him. 'Is there anyone among them who can cure the king's sickness?' asked Jñānasambandhi.

" 'The right side belongs to me, you weaklings! The left side is all yours to try your mantras on,' he said as he sprinkled sacred ashes and uttered mantras. The right side was immediately healed, but the fever on the left side became even double what it was before, and the other sages were unable to do anything about it.

" 'O embodiment of Rudra, cure me of my disease! O compassionate one, rid me of my sickness! Nalla Nāyanāru,[17] make me well! O noble one, cool this fever! O you to whom the best of yogis bow down, heal this mysterious ailment!' prayed the king, crying in pain.

"Jñānasambandhi sprinkled ashes on him three times and waved his hand and exorcised him. Not only did the king's fever abate, but his hunchback was straightened. It had been said that he would never lose his hunchback until the day he died, but those words proved to be false. The crippled Pāṇḍya lost his defect and became known as the beautiful Pāṇḍya. Even the fever, which had doubled in his left side, was gone.

"And he and his wife bowed down so low that all their limbs touched the ground. Then they performed the appropriate rituals.

" 'Now tell me what it is that you want to do,' said the embodiment of Śaṅkara.

"The Jains responded, 'Let's build a fire and throw in one leaf with a Jain mantra and one leaf with a Śaiva mantra. Whichever mantra does not burn in the fire will determine the winner.' And they looked to the king for his approval.

" 'Why not?' said Jñānasambandhi. 'Even if you balance a dog's tooth against gold, it does not mean that they are both worth the same.

Even if you use stones to balance a yoke when you are carrying milk, it does not mean that the two are comparable. Sandalwood and ordinary kindling may weigh the same, but they are not equal. You may put the Śaiva mantra and the Jain mantra to the same test but it does not mean that they are comparable.'

"The five-year-old boy[18] wrote the two syllables *śi-va* on a leaf. The king threw both leaves into a blazing fire. The leaf that bore the Jain mantra was instantly burned up. But the leaf that bore the Śaiva mantra shone like a lotus in the rays of the sun.

"As for the Jains, their heads were dead, but their tails were still alive. 'Let's try a third test,' they said. 'Let's throw a Śaiva mantra and a Jain mantra into the middle of the Kaveri. The leaf that floats down with the current will be the loser. The one that floats up against the current will be the winner,' they said.

" 'Let's not be like a timid merchant[19] who says, "Hit me again, and then I will hit you back!" Don't let the losers get away, O King! Let them be impaled on red-hot iron staves for all the world to see,' said Jñānasambandhi.

"The Jains and the king agreed to the plan, and they all went to the river. When the leaves were thrown into the water, the one bearing the Śaiva mantra floated straight upstream. But the other mantra was swept downstream with the current.

"Do tricky mantras have any power?

"Then Piḷḷa Nāyanāru was happy to make the king a devotee. And they rounded up all the eighteen thousand Jains. Meanwhile, Kulacciriyāru[20] had been heating iron spears, and he now used them to impale the Jains.

"Have you not heard, O Jain, what happened in Tiruvūru? That place is intimately associated with devotion. This is the story that had been told before."

The Story of Niḍumāra

"And then there was a king named Niḍumāra. In his realm he was the only individual who was not a Jain. When he got to thinking seriously about the matter, he could not imagine why there was not a single other individual who wore the three lines of ash on his forehead. He had heard how a Kāma Killer devotee named Śivajñānasambandhi had gone to the Pāṇḍya king. He had also heard the story of his heroic māheśvara argument, and how he had impaled all the Jains of the rival religion on iron staves.

"When King Niḍumāra reflected on these stories that he had heard, he called the noted Jain teachers and all those who were expert in Jain mantras.

" 'O you foolish followers of a senseless religion that has no basis in śruti! O you beastly animals who worship one who acts like an animal and know nothing of the lord of the beasts! O you sinners who wear no ashes and follow the evil doctrine of emptiness! O you untouchables who stray from the true path and employ illusory arguments based on nonduality and karma! O you enemies who have no interest in knowledge but instead set up yourselves as centers of ignorance! How have you managed to subject my people to your evil teachings for so long? Look what Piḷḷa Nāyanāru, Abhava's devotee, has done. He has employed logic and miracles to establish Śiva as the author of everything. By doing so, he has wiped out the very names of Buddhism and Jainism from the Pāṇḍya country. He even impaled their sages on iron staves.

" 'Therefore, you must worship Black Neck. If you do not, I will impale you upside down on red-hot iron spears,' he said.

"With a sharp sword in his hand, the Śaiva devotee cut off their heads like animals and impaled them on staves. But when the Jains turned and became devotees of Śiva, he joyfully protected them, did he not?

"O evil Jain, have you not heard of the power of King Niḍumāra, the devotee of Mṛḍa?"

The Story of Naminandi

"Another one of our devotees, named Naminandi,[21] lived in Cellattiruvālūru. He collected clarified butter and with it kept a thousand lamps burning for Bharga. But while he was enjoying himself in this way, the evil Jains got together and plotted how they could get rid of him, since he was the only devotee in the town.

" 'He has vowed to keep a thousand lamps burning in the dilapidated temple,' they thought. 'But if no one in this town gives him any clarified butter, he will have to move on.' And with that in mind, they made sure that no one would give him any butter.

" 'Lord of my life, I am unable to find any clarified butter anywhere. If the lamps go out, I will die,' he vowed, and was going to kill himself.

"Then his god appeared before him and gave him this order: 'There was a man, Varada Somaya, who used to light lamps with water used for oblations. You should do the same. Just bring water from the well, and the lamps will light themselves. Not only that, the cattle that belong to the evil-minded Jains will die.'

"When he heard what the God of gods had to say, Naminandi's face lit up with a smile. Then he lit ten million lamps with pond water. Furthermore, all the cattle died, so that not even a calf remained.

" 'This is incredible! All at once all the cattle have stiffened and died. Not only that, his god has given him the power to light millions and millions of lamps with water from the pond. This is truly amazing. See how great Śaiva devotees can be! Could it be that this ascetic has cursed us because of our refusal to provide him with clarified butter? How else are we to explain why these cattle suddenly stiffened and died? Why don't we go to see him?' said the people. And they went and fell prostrate before him.

"Then, O Jain, that merciful one brought the cattle back to life and initiated the Jains into the way of Śiva."

The Story of Sāṅkhyatoṇḍa

"In Śāntamaṅga, in the Coḍa country, there was a man named Sāṅkhyatoṇḍa[22] who had been born to Buddhist parents but who had acquired wisdom and begun to oppose the Buddhists. Because of some merit acquired in an earlier life, he had retained a recollection of devotion to Śiva.

" 'If I become a devotee,' he said, 'they will kill me. But if I do not become a devotee, how can I go on living? Why is it that there is not a soul for miles around who calls himself a worshiper of the liṅga? Lord of living beings,[23] is it fair for you to make me come into a family of people who are so devoid of devotion? How can you be so uncompassionate as to make me be born in a polluted house? There is no way that I can wholeheartedly worship you here. Until you destroy the three antivedic traditions, Jaina, Buddhist, and Cārvāka,[24] I am going to throw three stones at you three times a day. That is my vow.' And he proceeded to do as he promised.

"But for seven days the river was in flood, and he was not able to get to the temple. This made Sāṅkhyatoṇḍa nervous, and he quit eating. But when the seven days had passed, the water receded, and he went to the temple.

" 'Why should I have to keep count in order to throw the right number of stones? You do not seem to be taking them very seriously anyway, Mṛḍa. O God, I am so tired of you! Why do I go on like this? This one should be enough for you,' he said. And with that he picked up a huge rock, and with a tremendous grunt he threw it.

"The Śiva liṅga raised its hands to protect its head from the stone and smiled. 'I appreciate what you have done, and I am going to give you whatever you want as a boon,' he said.

"At once Sāṅkhyatoṇḍa fell prostrate on the earth. 'O great liṅga, even Hari and Brahma are unable to know your beginning and end. O embodiment of the liṅga, though a person may search the Veda in a thousand ways, he will not find you. O embodiment of the liṅga, though a person may apply all the standards of demonstration, śāstra, and purāṇas, he will never know you. O embodiment of the liṅga, you are beyond the minds of Sanaka, Sanandana,[25] and all the great sages. O embodiment of the liṅga, Śeṣa and Vāsuki[26] have many tongues, and even they cannot adequately praise you. Now I have found your lotus feet, and that is enough for me. What more do I need?

" 'When Kāma hit you with jasmine buds, you incinerated him. But when I threw stones at you, you were compassionate and offered me the protection due to a devotee. My lord, when I acted unjustly, with enmity toward you, you repaid me with kindness. Doesn't that seem remarkable? Does it make any sense, then, to distinguish between praise and blame or friendliness and unfriendliness? Actually, they are all the same.

" 'You are affectionate toward the devotees. You are the one who is involved in the devotees! Bharga, you are the lord of liberation! You are the embodiment of compassion.

" 'Nambi blamed you, and Malhaṇa praised you, and they both ended up joining you. Therefore, glance at me from the corner of your eye and bless me. May this stone become a stone flower, and may it appear on the side of your head in all your temples,' he requested.

"With this request, O Jain, Sāṅkhyatoṇḍa destroyed all the antivedic religions."

The Story of Kovūri Brahmayya

"There was a famous devotee of Black Neck named Kovūri Brahmayya who had a dispute with the Jain sages. When the Jains were shamed in the dispute, they looked at a nearby banyan tree and said, 'O devotee, let's do something for a visible sign. Tell me, shall we burn it up and have you bring it back, or do you want to burn it up and have us bring it back?'

" 'You burn it up, and I will bring it back,' said Brahmayya.

"So the Jains burned up the banyan tree with their mantras and tantras. When the evil mantras and tantras had destroyed the tree and when it had become ashes on the earth, Brahmayya sprinkled ashes over it and brought it back to life. And then, O Jain, he destroyed all the Jain vasadis in Kovūru!"

The Story of Deḍara Dāsayya

"Seven hundred Jain vasadis were built in the city called Poṭlacĕruvu,[27] and a Jain guru there was worshiped by twenty thousand Jains. He also served as the chief mentor for Ballaha and gave him advice and instruction.

"King Desiṅga Ballaha had a good wife named Suggaladevi[28] who was a devotee of the pure-minded Deḍara Dāsayya.[29] So she sent her friends to this Dāsayya to tell him about the situation.

"When he arrived, the Jains did everything they could to ruin his visit. But he paid no attention to them and strode on ahead. When he got to Suggaladevi, she fell on the lotus feet of her guru and floated on the ocean of his compassion. Then she provided a place for him to stay in a separate house.

"When they saw how boldly he came, the Jains went and made a report to the king. Being a Jain himself, he spoke these words to his wife: 'Whoever heard of a husband following one path and his wife following another? Who is this guru, and what kind of ideas are these? Send him away at once! If the Jains hear of this, there is going to be trouble. Now I do not want to have to say anything more about this! O lady with trembling eyes, send your sage away,' he said.

"Suggaladevi angrily replied, 'Don't you realize that he has come for the express purpose of humbling those base Jains? If a husband and wife must follow the same path, isn't it even more important for a guru and disciple to follow the same path? You remember, if you want to, what promises were made on our wedding day; that is your worry. I do not want to have anything more to do with them. If you want to get another wife, go ahead, but I will not accept anyone but Mṛḍa. Your only alternative is to defeat him in debates on the Vedas and śāstras and other philosophical questions.'

"Then she called all the wretched Jains to Ballaha's court, and to their right seated her true, Jain-destroying guru on a nine-jeweled[30] throne and served his feet. The Jains tried all the mantras, tantras, tricks, *yantras*, and magic that they knew. They also argued aggressively from the strength of *Advaita*, *śūnya*, *māya*, and karma.

"The true guru, on the other hand, employed arguments drawn from the Vedas and vedānta. And he wisely demonstrated many points by drawing on examples from *Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika,*[31] and other learned sources.

" 'Rāmanātha[32] has no second. He is the actor. He is the true path. He is everything. He is the lord of all. Śruti says that Rudra is the only one. And as regards the essence, it says that the liṅga contains the entire universe. It also says that there is nothing outside the liṅga. This is constantly reiterated by śruti. If you check into it, all of this universe is only a form of Īśvara and nothing else. If you think you are up to it, come and argue with me,' he said.

" 'Actually, what is there to debate? You yourself have just said that the entire universe, including the mobile and immobile, is Śaṅkara. So why should we go into a temple to worship if Black Throat is everywhere? And if so, is this Kāma Killer the body, the life, or the soul of all the moving and nonmoving things?' they said.

" 'O you Jains, listen to my answer to your first question. If one says that the king is the only one in this kingdom, does that mean that all the ants, *mālas, boyas,*[33] and other creatures are themselves kings? Similarly, when the characteristics of the lord of everything are investigated, he is found to be intimately involved with everything. If one says that Īśvara is nondual, does it mean that everything is nondual? And if you then ask why one should go to the temple to worship, this is my answer to that stupid question. Moonlight strikes all the stones. So why is it that only the *candrakānta*[34] melts in the moonlight? The close relationship that makes it melt arises only between those two. Moonlight falls on all the stones in the mountains, but what happens? The moonlight does not enliven them, does it? But yet, the candrakānta looks for the moonlight, and the moonlight looks for the candrakānta. Everything is found in the omnipresent Śiva. But the heart of a śaraṇa melts because there is a special relationship between them. Do other human hearts melt? Everything is in the liṅga, is it not? But what difference does it make? Śaṅkara's pleasure is for the śaraṇas, and the śaraṇas' hearts are for Śaṅkara. It is like the milk cow that looks at the calf as her own. And the calf is a great source of joy for it. The farmer is happy when both of them are thriving. But the cow does not know of the existence of the farmer; it only knows the calf. The relationship between the liṅga and the devotee follows a similar pattern.[35]

" 'The rains that fall in the month of Svāti[36] fall on all the bodies of water, just like any other rain. But although the oyster waits for these rains, it does not open its mouth for any others even though it gets soaked by them. It is the relationship between the rains of Svāti and the oyster that gives birth to the pearl. The relationship between Abhava and the śaraṇa is like that.

" 'O evil men, you are not able to understand the affinity between the liṅga and devotee. Why, then, should I speak of the pleasures of the relationship between them?

" 'So you want to know whether he is the body, the life, or the soul? Well, let me answer your foolish question. The body is the residue of past karma. The body is the abode of pleasure and pain. The body is the storehouse of merits and demerits. The body is not Śiva. So much for that.

" 'Perhaps you think that the *jīva*[37] might be Śiva? But let it be known that the jīva is polluted whereas Śiva is pure. The jīva has bad karma, but Śiva has no karma. The jīva has aspects, but Śiva has no aspects. The jīva's nature is animal, but Śiva is the lord of animals. The jīva is not liberated, but Śiva is liberated. The jīva is mortal, but Śiva is immortal. The jīva is impermanent, but Śiva is permanent. The jīva is impure, but Śiva is pure. The jīva dies, but Śiva never dies. The jīva is caught in the cycle of birth and death, but Śiva is free from the cycle of birth and death. The jīva has doubts, but Śiva has no doubts. Therefore, it should be clear that the jīva cannot be God. Leave it at that; it is not appropriate to think of the two as the same.

" 'Listen, you should not talk of the *ātma* as the *paramātma* either. The ātma is associated with the five elements. The ātma is associated with the five senses. And the ātma is associated with the characteristics of the body. Therefore, the ātma is not Śiva.

" 'Śiva is the subtle and indivisible consciousness that pulls the threads of the puppets in a puppet show. Like an atom within an atom, he dwells where there is not room for anything else. He is like the oil in a sesame seed. He is like the fire in a piece of wood. He is like the iron in ore. He is like an image in the eye. He is like the butter in milk. He is like the moon reflected in a pot of water. He is like an image reflected in a mirror. He is like the thread through a string of beads. He is like the space in a jar or a cloth.[38] He is like the structure of a crystal. He is like the plant in a seed. He is like the meaning in a word. He is like the echo in a mountain. This is how the lord of everything is in everything. He is so fully everywhere that there is not even room for the point of a needle. Īśa is the lord of everything. He is the destroyer of karma. He is my Rāmeśa,' he said.

" 'Dāsayya, if this is really so, what are Śiva's distinguishing characteristics? You have said that he is permanent, but that all of this is impermanent. It seems to us that either Śiva is impermanent or else he cannot be in all of this. You have said that Śiva is divine, but that all of this is not divine. It seems to us that either Śiva is not divine, or else all this does not have Śiva in it. You have said that Śiva is the lord of animals, and that all the rest are animals. It seems to us that either Śiva is an animal or he is not all of these. Isn't there at least one quality of Hara in all these things?' they responded with their spurious arguments.

"Then the honorable Deḍara Dāsayya looked at the wretches and spoke these words: 'You can extract oil from sesame seeds and light a lamp with it, but does that mean that the lamp exists in the sesame seeds? Although sesame seeds do not have the characteristics of oil, they do contain oil. Even though Īśa exists in everything, there is no reason why everything should have his characteristics. Why shouldn't it be possible for Śiva to exist in things without their taking on any of his qualities? There is oil in sesame seeds, but are there sesame seeds in oil? Everything is in the all-knower, but is the all-knower in everything?

" 'Look at these analogies in order to understand how he is and is not in things. In the process of churning and ripening,[39] the knower knows the supreme. This is impossible for an ignorant man to perceive, even if he tries. Thus, the all-knower is everywhere. All proofs lead to that conclusion,' he said.

"When they heard his arguments, the Jains laughed at him, thought for a while, and then spoke these words: 'We have profited much from what you have to say. If all this is true, and everything is Śiva, is he to be found in the place where you defecate and urinate? Is that also a high place?'

"Then Dāsayya made the Jains look like fools with words that were like a slap in the face. 'Don't you Jains know anything? Were you totally unaware of this before? Is this totally new to you? We will walk on the head of any fool who talks only of karma and says that there is no Mṛḍa. The mouths of those despicable creatures who say that there is no Kāma Killer will be our latrines. Don't be nasty! I cannot lie to you; this is my response to whatever you ask. Except for these two places, is there a place where the God of gods is not? He is everything but he does not get involved with everything. He causes everything to be born, but he is not born in everything. He sets everything in motion, but he himself does not move. He kills everything, but he himself does not die along with everything. Everything exists in him and he absorbs everything into himself with nothing left over. He is the form of consciousness who expresses everything by his commands. He brings everything into existence by simply willing it to be so. He is unmanifest, but he fosters manifestations. He exists, but at the same time he does not exist. He exists for those who believe that he exists. His essence is beyond thought. He gives himself to anyone who thinks of him. He is immeasurable, but if you know his measure, he will always be with you. You cannot make him love you, but if you love him, he will give you what you want. It is difficult to keep up with him, but he guides his followers to the very end. If you try to catch him, he will make his glory known, but if you catch him, he opens up to you. His appearance is beyond words, but as soon as you start to listen, he reveals himself. His brilliance is more than you can stand to see, but if you look for him, you will see him. His behavior is beyond perception, but sometimes he can be perceived. His flavor is beyond the power of taste, but if you transcend taste, he will grant his grace. His language is beyond words, but if you understand his words, he will make you fruitful. He is known to be affectionate to his devotees, but he is also well known to be beyond all power. His words are beyond logic. In his manifest form, he is the visible liṅga.

" 'Therefore, it is not within your capacity to know our Liṅgadeva's power. Rāmanātha is everything, but yet the nondevotees are not capable of gaining him. Don't say that this has never been proven! If you simply ask me to, I will give you visible evidence. It is well known there are seven hundred Jain vasadis in Poṭlacĕruvu, and I am going to have them all destroyed. You are mere animals. What more can I say to you?'

"The Jains first concluded that there was no way to destroy him, but finally they hit on a plan. They decided to test him with a deadly serpent to see what he would do. So they brought a snake that was so terrible that it would fight with Vāsuki, flipping his tongues from anger. They put this in a pot and said, 'You have said that Mṛḍa is everywhere. Is he in this pot?'

" 'Of course, he is. Rāmayya[40] is everywhere, and he is most certainly here in this pot,' said Dāsayya.

"Because he remembered the lotus feet of the recent and ancient devotees, he was not afraid to approach the pot where the terrible serpent was writhing and striking and falling back, even though it was hissing and slashing at the top of the pot and making it roll around.

"Then Dāsayya said, 'Rāmanātha is omnipresent and imperishable. The best people in the world are devotees of him. The greatest sinners are those who do not worship the supreme being. Listen, all you people, to what I am saying!'

"And with that he put his hand into the pot and dragged out the serpent that lay coiled within. Instantly it turned into a crystal liṅga. The brilliant rays of the crystal shot out like the shining rays of the sun and filled all the surrounding space. It shone brightly in the palm of his hand, which destroys the evil religions.

"When they saw it, all the people who were gathered about gave cries of victory. Then all the Jains who were there raised their hands to their foreheads. Suggala enjoyed the situation immensely and praised her guru without restraint.

"Meanwhile, Ballaha and all the Jains were discomfited, and they fell prostrate on the earth. And Deḍara Dāsayya endowed Ballaha with a liṅga. Once he had smashed their logic, he established the crystal liṅga in that town and called it Uttareśvara. Dāsayya then destroyed the seven hundred Jain vasadis.

"Did he not initiate all the Jains into the Śaiva path, O Jain?"

The Story of Hiriya Nācayya

"In a town called Māruḍiga lived another devotee named Hiriya Nācayya whom no one knew to be a devotee. The Jains of the other religion were very arrogant, and wherever he looked, they were there. In fact, there were seventeen hundred Jain vasadis. But there was only a single Śaiva temple and they destroyed that and killed the priest.

" 'I have to destroy these Jains before I can even worship and give offerings to Śiva. If I delay, this town is going to be in real danger,' said Nācayya, and he left that place.

"Within ten days he had gathered up twelve thousand Kāma Killer devotees, and they had loaded seventeen hundred liṅgas on carts. Traveling quickly, they camped around Māruḍiga and announced to one and all: 'All the poor, the brahmins, the heralds, the foreigners, and everyone else who is not a Jain must get out.'

"Among them were thirteen chiefs[41] who opposed the Jains. To the enjoyment of the devotees of Hara, they attacked the Jains, surrounded them, and fought with them head to head. In a rage, they cut off their own heads, and holding their severed heads in their left hands, they wielded their swords with their right arms. They attacked with great ferocity. They shouted and reeled and whooped and danced, and their swords flashed. As for the Jains, they screamed with fright and swooned. And the devotees killed them and cut off their heads.

"Then they continued on with their famous deeds and songs. First, they counted the one thousand seven hundred Jina vasadis and smashed the heads of every one of the Jina idols. Then they ripped down the flags from the vasadis. In each and every vasadi they set up a liṅga. When they had finished with all this, they put their own heads back in their proper places. For this reason they have come to be known as the thirteen chiefs.

"O base creature, don't you know the eternal power of Nācayya? It was only yesterday that this happened. Don't you even know what happened to your despicable god, Jina? What more is there to say? Is it any big matter to destroy you beasts?"

The Story of Somanna

"In a place called Huḷigara[42] lived a Śūli devotee named Somanna. He made it a regular habit to perform touch worship three times every day. One day Somanna developed a stabbing pain in his eye, and as a result of the affliction he was unable to see. Since he could not go to the temple, he just quit eating.

"Now with the exception of himself, everyone else in his town was a Jain, and they hated him because of his devotion.

" 'Why should you go on starving yourself? We will take you to the temple right now,' said the Jains. But instead those deceivers took him to the Surahŏnna vasadi. 'Bow down, this is your Three Eyes,' they said.

"So Somanna put his hand on Jina's head, and to his touch it felt like a liṅga. Three times he bowed down. Then he fell prostrate so that all his limbs touched the earth.

" 'You can get up now; that is enough. Jina is pleased with your worship. Now you can become a Jain and live here,' said the Jains.

"Somanna was enraged. 'You fools, I wouldn't lift up my hand to Jina or anything of the kind. This is actually a manifestation of the liṅga. Come on, I will show you what I mean,' he said.

"Somanna then went inside the vasadi and removed the poultice from his eyes. With great difficulty he got up and opened his eyes. As soon as he did so, the Jina idol broke into pieces. Then Śiva emerged from within and stood on the remains of the Jain idol. The god who is mounted on a bull established himself in his new form in the temple of Surahŏnna and took the name Someśa in recognition of Somanna's devotion.

"Why do you need a mirror to see the bracelet on your own head! The broken Jina idol is witness enough. O Jain, the story is well known. How can you help knowing what happened in Huḷigara!"

The Story of Vaijakavva

"In Paravaḷiga there was a woman named Vaijakavva who had the feet of the moon-wearing god in her heart. But all of the people in the town, including her own husband, were followers of the Jain path.

"One festival day her husband was about to serve a feast to the Jains. The woman had done all the cooking, and when her husband went to invite the Jains, she surveyed the preparations and thought, 'O Parameśa, not even one devotee of Śiva will be here, and all this food is going to be wasted on others.' And she was deeply troubled.

"Just then Mṛḍa appeared in the guise of an ascetic. Vaijakavva was afraid at first, but then she became very happy. She fell prostrate and bowed down again and again. She rolled around in the dust from his feet over her head. Then she washed the feet of this ascetic who was actually a form of the first god. She drank the water, bowed down, and showed him all the appropriate hospitality. She seated the pure-bodied man on a comfortable seat. She served him all kinds of foods, arranging them on a banana leaf to her eyes' satisfaction.

"While she served, the ascetic ate quickly. He ate with great gusto, smacking his lips. But while he was enjoying the feast, the Jains arrived.

"When they saw the killer of the god of death, they turned back. But when her husband came, the ascetic at once disappeared.

" 'What is the meaning of this, Vaijakavva? Where did the ascetic go? Show me where he is right now! He would not stand for being seen by the Jain mendicants. How many hearts do you have[43] to feed him like that? You have brought destruction on my house. Where is that pile of ashes? What right do you have to disobey your husband's command? It looks to me as if you and that ascetic have been carrying on! If you want to run off with him, you had better get going,' he said. And with that, he began to whip her on the private parts of her body. But his wife kept thinking of Śiva and paid no attention to him at all. In fact, the blows that the husband administered did not even land on his wife.

"Remember how Śambhu did Piṭṭavva's free labor for the king after she fed him?[44] When he struggled and strained and wore himself out, the overseers angrily shouted at him to keep moving. But the lashes that they directed toward him fell on the servants of the Coḍa king. Well, that is exactly how it happened this time, too.

"All the beastly Jains who filled the temples and crowded the streets received welts, and the skin peeled off their backs from the blows. They cried out and doubled over with pain. As the blows rained down, they instinctively tried to protect themselves with their hands and rushed about hither and thither. They promised to mend their ways. They were horrified, confused, and they screamed with terror.

"They opened their mouths and wept for grief. They climbed the Jain vasadis and tumbled back down from them. They ran for the alleys. They fell to the ground. They dived into ponds. They climbed trees. In their flight they even tumbled over one another. They shrank from the blows, were extremely agitated, and squabbled among themselves.

" 'It is our karma,' they said as they sought shelter behind Jina.

" 'We are going to be caught,' they screamed as they looked over their shoulders while they ran.

" 'Where can we go?' they cried.

" 'We are going to die! God knows what is going to happen to us! We are in great pain!' they sobbed.

"They pounded their own heads with stones. They groveled on the earth and wondered how they could possibly escape. They looked with terror at the blood that oozed from their bodies as they screamed in pain.

" 'There is no way we can escape,' they cried as they swooned. 'This must be Hara's work.'

"While the Jains were writhing on the ground under the terrible blows, a wise man saw what was happening and said, 'Every blow that this man administers to his wife falls instead on these Jains. Like the rays of the sun, every blow becomes a thousand.

" 'Śrīcandramuni has fallen in a pond. Ācāryamuni has fallen in a ditch. Varacandramuni has climbed the vasadi and come tumbling down. Arahatamuni has fled to the forest. Kṣapaṇendramuni's life breath has suffered. Vipulendramuni's back has been broken. Rājendramuni is dead. The guru of all these Jains is also dead. All of them are dead. This has to be the work of Kāma Killer.' And he came between the man and the wife whom he was beating and prevented him from continuing.

"At once the blows quit raining down on the wretches. But even though the savage knew that his wife was deeply devoted, he acted as if he did not know anything and said, 'You fed an ascetic without my knowledge. But even that was not enough for you, and now all these people have suffered. It is you who have hurt all these great sages. How do you expect these mendicants with their tricks and spells to let me go on living? I am scared to death of them. Get out of my house at once!' And he drove Vaijakavva away.

"As the woman went along, she came to a Jain temple, but she mistook it for a Śaiva temple. Because she had never been out of her house before, she could not tell the difference. Asking Three Eyes for refuge, she entered the temple with hands folded and bowed down.

"At once the Jina idol crumbled, and the pieces fell in all directions. And in its place, to her joy, there appeared an amazing liṅga.

"If a husband deviates from devotion to Śiva, it is completely appropriate for the wife to disobey him.[45] If a wife worships Bharga, she can never go wrong by leaving her husband.

"There were women named Nālāyani and Anasūya who were married to sages. Because their husbands were not devotees of Śiva, they left them and worshiped Śambhu and gained liberation.

"Everybody knows about the lady named Tilakavva. She left her husband because he was opposed to Śaiva devotion. As he was about to strike her, she flew to the Śaiva temple. Her husband chased her and while she took shelter behind Śiva, he angrily grabbed her sari. At once she turned into a man. This happened because of her deep devotion to Śiva.

" 'These are all stories of ancient days, but now we have seen this lady's devotion for ourselves,' said the devotees.

"When they heard the devotees' praises and the people's victory cries, all the Jain sages were amazed, and they bowed down to Vaijakavva and praised her.

"Because of her great devotion, Śiva became known as Vaijanātha. And it is he who is here in Paravaḷiga. This, O evil Jain, is the power of Vaijakavva.

"The devotees of old were immeasurably valorous and courageous, but why so many words? Has the ancient liṅga weakened today? Has the power of the devotees diminished yet? Even I can handle the destruction of these petty religions, so why do I need to call on the mighty ones of the past?

These Jains had come along and caused a lot of trouble there in Abbalūru[46] with their claims that theirs was the original religion. They had opposed us, and we had defeated them in debate, but still they insisted that we show them visible proof.

"So I said, 'By the time the sun rises tomorrow the big Jain vasadi that is known as Hiriyavasadi will fall down, along with its walls. The head of your god will be split and lie in the dust. When that happens, you may truly call me a servant of Śiva. That will be the visible evidence you are looking for.'

"When I got there, the vasadi shattered and fell down. The Jina idol crumbled and fell in a heap. All the people, including the Jains, were amazed, and even to this day no vasadi stands in that city.

"Do I need to continue with these stories? From now on, the Jains will suffer the miseries of an old whore. If you cowards cannot point out a proper path, get out of here. I am a servant of the famous Mŏṙaṭada Vaṅkayya. I will never be defeated.

"O Jain, is it appropriate for me to cut off my head and get it right back? No, I will cut it off now and walk the streets of this town for seven days and then get it back. Can you even watch me do that? Not only that, I will tear down all the Jain vasadis in Kalyāṇa so that there will not even be one left for a sample. Furthermore, I will smash all the idols of Jina. This is my vow. Is there any reason why I should not subject you two-legged beasts to this?" he said.

The Jains agreed to his proposal. They all gathered together and sat on one side and watched. On the other side sat Basava with the devotees in attendance. Bijjala and his ministers were also there, along with all the people of the city—young and old alike.

To everyone's amazement, Ekānta Rāmayya drew himself up like a warrior chief and with a smile on his face bowed to the assembly of devotees. With a mighty roar he placed his sword at his own throat with one hand. He grabbed his knotted hair in the other hand. With tremendous force he drove his head against the blade. But the head in his hand shouted, "Hurrah! Hurrah!"

Basava praised him; the devotees cheered him on; the king nodded his head in approval and folded his hands above his head. Everybody gave victory shouts. The common people watched in a state of confusion. All kinds of instruments sounded. And all kinds of festivities broke loose.

As he strode through the streets, he had his sword in his right hand and his head in his left hand. He harmonized and danced to the beat of the cymbals. He balanced on his sword. He gave refuge. He gave cries of victory. He shouted and roared aloud.

For seven days, Ekānta Rāmayya strode through the city. Then he went and stood in front of the temple gate and cried out, "Come on now, you Jains, you have seen my vow!"

Then Ekānta Rāmayya, the peerless warrior, the follower of the otherworldly path, the destroyer of karma, placed his head on his neck, where it leaned slightly to one side.

The people were amazed and praised him, saying:

"Ekānta Rāmayya's head is proof that Hara is God."

"Ekānta Rāmayya's power is supreme throughout the three worlds."

"He is the only manifestation of the supreme God."

"His head is turned to one side as if to suggest that he does not want to look at evil-minded people," they said fearfully.

The Jains gave him an acknowledgment of his victory, written by the king. And they all came and bowed down before the assembly of devotees. On each person's face the devotees impressed the marks of Śiva.

With cries and roars, the heroic assembly of māheśvaras rose up. They quickly destroyed all the Jain vasadis and broke the heads of all the Jina idols. When they were finished, there was not a trace of a Jain vasadi or a Jina idol in all of Kaḷyāṇa. In a fury, the devotees harassed and killed every known Jain and smashed them all into the ground.

The devotees of Black Throat responded by praising the peerless courage of Ekānta Rāmayya. Meanwhile, Basava worshiped Ekānta Rāmayya as if he were Saṅgameśa.

Anyone who hears, copies, or is fond of the divine story of the famous devotee Ekānta Rāmayya will be immune to the danger of death by water, deadly poisons, fire, weapons, animals, snakes, and diseases. By the grace of Śiva, he will gain the seen, unseen, all comforts, and the better world to come.

The Story of Sŏḍḍaladevu Bācayya

There was a brave man named Sŏḍḍaladevu Bācayya[47] who was nothing less than Black Throat himself. He had suppressed the inimical passions of the senses. He continuously meditated on Bharga. He was the supreme devotee of the god with fierce eyes. He was incomparably valorous and capable of being both compassionate and wrathful. He was an enemy of the afflicted and evildoers. He protected the righteous and granted them strength and bliss. His mind was free of evil thoughts. He was not born out of a womb. He never gave shelter to bhavis. He had no rebirth. He was peaceful. He was self-controlled. His devotion was pure and great. He was a thunderbolt on the mountains of the gods of the middling religions. He was an ax against the trees of the other gods. He was a lion against the elephants of the other gods. He was Agastya[48] to the oceans of the other gods.

All the people of the world praised him, saying, "He has the valor of the god with three eyes. He has the omniscience of Nandikeśvara. He has Bhṛṅginātha's[49] steadfastness for the liṅga. He has Vīrabhadra's terrible wrath. He has the power to curse like Bhṛgu[50] and Dadhīci.[51] As a logician, he is the equal of Gautama[52] and the rest.

"Did the lord of all gurus bring these qualities together to produce the divine Bācayya? If not, how can he have gotten the divine power to be a Rudra of the kali age?"

According to the ancient principles, the evidence of śruti and smṛti, and the knowledge derived from Vedānta; according to Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, and the other śāstras; according to the import of the great purāṇas and āgamas; according to all the standards of physical and inferential evidence; and according to adamant logic, he established that there is only one cause for the manifestation of the world and its maintenance and destruction. That God is always in a state of bliss, and he is the husband of Ambika. He is the lord of animals, and he is the prime mover. All of the other gods are mere mortals.

So he decapitated the Jains and cut off the noses of the followers of Viṣṇu. He drove out the nondualists,[53] he destroyed those who argue in favor of hatred, and he humbled the atheists.

After establishing devotion to the lord of all, the mighty Ṣŏḍḍaladevu Bācayya went regularly to Saurāṣṭra,[54] where he conducted the *jāgaram*.[55]

The day came, and he went to Bijjala and said, "I want to go to Saurāṣṭra to perform the jāgaram."

"You cannot go! There is too much work for you to do here. You have to dole out the daily allowances from the granary. How can you serve two lords? To do so is to be like a woman with a baby who goes out as a prostitute.[56] You cannot serve the king and be a devotee at the same time. Either go to Saurāṣṭra and forget about working for me or else ask the Lord of Saurāṣṭra to come here. Otherwise, forget about celebrating Śivarātri. I cannot give you time off from your duties," said the king. And following the advice of the people of the other creed, he prevented Bācayya from going.

So Bācayya did not go. Instead he thought, "It will be obstinate of me to go in opposition to the king's command, and that will cause difficulties. Instead, my benefactor himself will come here. That will be the same as if I went there, and my vow will not be broken. Is it possible to break a vow to Śiva?" And he was completely confident that it would happen.

One day in advance, the great Someśa[57] came in broad daylight like a messenger carrying a folded letter and a Nandi standard.

While Bācayya was busy measuring out the doles in the granary, he came to him and said, "The Lord of Saurāṣṭra is coming, and he has sent me ahead to announce his arrival. Śaṅkara orders you to read this letter. He will be here in less than a day. All you have to do is to stay here and wait for him. Just pour out the grain from this big storage basket, and Someśa will appear there." And with these clear instructions, he disappeared.

"Never fear, the Lord of Saurāṣṭra is coming. Don't say that he didn't come according to Rāvaṇa's wishes.[58] Rāvaṇa was no devotee even though he did have great power as the result of his austerities. Śiva is always available to his devotees, but never to nondevotees. Didn't

Someśa come right down in front of Guḍḍavva[59] and allow himself to be captured by her? That took place in a town called Āvindigĕ. You must believe that he is going to come to this city. As visible evidence of God's coming, a messenger came. That was none other than the Lord of Saurāṣṭra himself. Do ordinary messengers have the ability to appear and disappear? He himself came in the most remarkable way, brought the news to the people, and left. And he will return. The one who just disappeared was Īśa himself," said the people of the city in praise.

Engulfed in an ocean of joy Bācayya put the letter containing Śiva's command on his head. And he arranged for the city to be auspiciously decorated. Then Bācayya, Basava, and the rest of the devotees formed an assembly. They were transported with bliss and sang and danced. And they cried out that he was coming as they pointed to the sky.

It was as if the seven oceans were roaring. And there was a mighty sound of music. Accompanied by the music, to everyone's surprise, the Lord of Saurāṣṭra broke the grain basket and manifested himself while the earth quaked.

The devotees praised Bācayya, saying, "Siddha Rāmayya[60] went to Śrīśailam and prayed to Mallikārjuna, the pure soul, but he was unable to get him to come to Sonnalikapuram.[61] But now Bācayya has called Somanātha and brought him here without even leaving this place. Is there anyone else as great as this?"

Meanwhile, Bijjala was so amazed that he came and fell prostrate before him with all eight limbs on the ground. His employees also gave cries of victory. In honor of Bācayya, Basava had all the bins destroyed and had a raised terrace built. In less than a minute, he had built a temple of gold inlaid with precious stones, equipped with fortified gateways.[62]

Then Bācayya devotedly fulfilled his Śivarātri vow. And the god has come to be known as Somanātha of the Granary.

Bijjala grew intolerant at the rising power of an alien religion. With evil intent, he and his cohorts set up an idol of Govinda[63] in the city of Pratāpanārāyaṇa,[64] and there they had a temple built. On an auspicious day they consecrated the idol and proceeded to worship it. With pleasure he held court there in the temple, with all his employees in attendance.

When the king saw that all his employees were following that worship, he looked at them and angrily said, "What about Bācirāju?[65] Is he a devotee or something? Has he grown too big? Or doesn't he know that this is happening? Maybe he knows about it but is just not paying any attention because he does not like serving me. Why hasn't he come to this worship?"

Then Basava, the minister, said to his king, "If he had failed to perform his duties in your service, or if he had run away in battle, it would have been appropriate for you to punish him. But how can you expect him to come to the temples of other gods, O King?[66] Do devotees enter the houses of other gods? Do they look at them or listen to them? Bhṛṅgi was only interested in union with the liṅga, and he did not even bow to the half of Śiva that was his wife, Pārvati. He arranged for the right half of Abhava to stand alone and bowed only to that. Why should I say more? Are the devotees of Maheśvara going to bow down to these small-time gods?[67]

"There was once a pramatha called Ghaṇṭākarṇa[68] who did not want to listen to any other sounds. So he rang bells and tied thousands of them to his ears. In this way he became famous as Ghaṇṭākarṇa throughout the world."

The Story of Ariyama

"Among the sixty-three, there was a man named Ariyama who lived in Mahendramaṅgaḷa. His devotion was so great that he vowed to decapitate anyone who mentioned the name of another god in his presence.

"One day a brahmin came to his house reciting the *Rudram*[69] and asking for alms. When Ariyama came out to give him something, a grain of boiled rice fell on the earth, and the brahmin let an alien name[70] pass through his lips.

"Ariyama was so enraged that he struck the brahmin with his ladle and ripped open his stomach.

"Of course, this made the brahmins very angry, and they went to the king and said, 'A devotee named Ariyama killed a scholar outright. It was done with total disregard for the vedic injunction that a brahmin should never be killed. Is it right to kill a good brahmin and vedic scholar for no reason whatsoever? If a person cannot give alms, shouldn't he just ask the mendicant to move on? Is there any excuse for killing him?'

"The king responded by calling Ariyama and said, 'What did this brahmin do wrong that you have killed him? Is this morally right? How can you be so stupid? Is this a result of your devotion? If you explain what happened, we will be lenient with you. Now, what did he do? If you do not tell us, we will have to do to you what you did to him.'

"When he heard this, Ariyama smiled and said, 'Why do you keep up this drivel? One way or the other I killed him. Only Śambhu can judge my action. Not only that, God is the only one responsible for anyone's being killed. What makes you think you are in charge of killing or protecting?'

"The king immorally equated a Śaiva devotee with a bhavi worm and arrogantly sent Ariyama off to get the same treatment.

"As Ariyama was being taken along, he darted into a Śaiva temple, clapped his hands, and asked, 'O great soul, is it right for me to die along with this great sinner, this traitor?'

"Pleased with Ariyama's steadfast identification with the liṅga and his peerless purity of devotion, the liṅga said, 'Is it possible to equate a śaraṇa with a person of evil speech who utters the names of other gods?'

"Instantly he opened up his chest and asked Ariyama to come in. And Ariyama happily entered the womb of the liṅga. Just then the executioners came in shouting that they had seen where he was going and caught hold of a cubit of the end of his waist cloth. But he himself entered the liṅga.

"Today the cloth that Ariyama wore remains there as a symbol of Śaiva devotees' disregard for foolish gods."

The Story of Vīra Śaṅkara

"Listen to the story of Vīra Śaṅkara, a devotee of Kāma Killer. Even in his dreams he never thought of, touched, or spoke about other gods. This was the guiding principle of his life. Then one night he dreamed that he had touched a Buddhist. He was enraged and woke up wondering what to do.

" 'What do you do with a pot that has been touched by a dog? You have to burn it, that is what!' he thought.

"And he went resolutely to Śrīśailam. In front of Hāṭakeśvara[71] raged a fire and on this fire he placed an iron griddle and sat in the middle of it. In order to double the fearsome heat of the griddle, he hit himself with thirty-two weapons.

"Kāma Killer was pleased, and that very moment granted Vīra Śaṅkara the status of living in his company.

"It is only natural that the devotees of the killer of death have nothing to do with any other gods."

The Story of Śivalĕṅka Mancĕyya

"In the temple of Viśveśvara in Kāśi,[72] Śivalĕṅka[73] Mancĕyya made it a practice to worship Śiva three times a day by cutting off his fingers and getting them back. He was widely praised for this, and people so marveled at what he did that he gained great fame.

"To the consternation of the people of the other religions, he hoisted a banner in that city, and it was like a sword at their noses. By doing so, he announced that the heroic māheśvara creed is the only religion and that Īśvara is the only actor. Then the people of other religions assembled near the temple of Gadādhara[74] in Kāśi and proudly summoned him to debate with them.

"Mancĕyya shone with incomparable power. Those of the other religions quoted from their śāstras, and each of them questioned him individually. According to the meanings derived from the various śāstras, and in such a way that it was acceptable to the various religions, he skillfully explained all the subtle meanings of the purāṇas and śāstras. And again they questioned him on the meanings of the śruti, the *saṁhita*,[75] and all the rest. The people of the other religions grew afraid to even open their mouths in front of Mancĕyya, the scholar.

" 'Enough of these references and quotations. Is there any visible evidence for all of this?' they asked.

" 'You want evidence? I will have Viṣṇu himself bow down to the lord of the universe. Just watch,' he said. And at once he set out to do it.

"While everyone was singing his praises, he commenced thinking of Kāma Killer's devotees and said, 'Hey, Viṣṇu! Go and bow down to your guru, the lord of the universe.'

"The adherents of the perishable religions quaked as Śrīramaṇa[76] himself gave a shake at the learned Mancĕna's order, bowed down, and left the temple. He walked into the street behind Śivalĕṅka Mancĕyya and the host of Śiva's devotees. Behind him came the shattered people of the other religions. And Mancĕyya brought Hari and made him bow down to Viśveśvara.

" 'A devotee of Śiva is my lord' has since then become popularly known as the words of Keśava.

"When Mancĕnapaṇḍita called him, Viṣṇu responded by bowing down as if to say, 'Let me do as he says and live!'

" 'He is caught,' said the devotees of Śiva.

"This is the reason why Hari still lies in front of Viśvanātha, bowing down to him. Nobody of any religion has ever been able to make Viṣṇu stand up. There is no better evidence for the superiority of Hara than the prostrate form of Viṣṇu. Hari is subject to the devotees. He is destroyed by their anger and lives when they are kind to him. If you want to know about it, listen to this."

The Story of Śaṅkaradāsi

"There was a man called Śaṅkaradāsi[77] who was a second Śiva. When he looked angrily at the other gods and the people of the other religions, they fell into pieces. He worked for King Jagadekamalla.[78] When the puny people of the other religions saw him, they were troubled, for when Śaṅkaradāsi was angry, he looked at the idol of Nārāyaṇa. Instantly it was engulfed in fire, as if it came from the terrible forehead eye of Śiva and at once, as everybody knows, the idol of Nārāyaṇa was broken. The empty sanctum of the temple is there for you to see. Therefore, O King, you know the power of our devotees. But why talk any more about that? You have already seen the power of Bācayya. Don't you remember how he called Someśa, and the god came immediately into his presence?

"He measured out millions of daily rations in the granaries, but he did not write down the people's names. What he did was to write down the five syllables.[79] But when he had to, he read out all the accounts without making a mistake. Why must I repeat what you already know? And why don't you know what went on after that?" said Basava, telling the whole story and then leaving.

Bācayya figured that he should at least go to participate in the arguments. So he went angrily and stood and waited after bowing down to the devotees.

The king reproached him: "Why didn't you come when all the rest of my ministers and advisers came for the dedication of Hari who is the lord of the entire universe?"

Bācayya's body swelled with rage, and he said, "O King, these little gods are born again and again, and they continue to roam around aimlessly. You claim that they are the creators, but which of them is actually the creator? The creator of creators is my creator, isn't he? Śambhu is the creator of everything that has been created. Is the creation equal to the creator? No, the creator is the chief, and no one else can make that claim. Is there a separate creator and destroyer? Are Hari, Aja, the gods, and all the rest equal to Hara? Viṣṇu himself has admitted that his creator is Maheśvara. Can he be the supreme lord? If you think Viṣṇu is the protector, why didn't he protect his own son?[80] Any allegation that the god with four faces is god was proven false when he had his head cut off—if Brahma is responsible for creation, couldn't he reproduce his own head?[81] If Jina and Buddha were actually gods, would they have taken the form of mere men without any special powers? They have rejected the Vedas and have acquired karma like ordinary men. Can they be lords of men? All this is self-evident! How can you call an atheist the lord of the universe? What do you make of this? Even when an elephant was destroying them,[82] their vasadis failed to protect them. And what of those who would claim that Māya is God?[83] How can anything with the name Māya be God?

"Both Aja and Hari serve under Hara. The other three are totally outside śruti. Which one among these five is the creator? And which of these six systems presents the correct view?[84]

"Śruti says, 'Rudra is the only one.' Why even consider the other views?

"How can you say that the Veda is God? If it were true, how could it have been stolen by Somaka?[85] And if the earth is God, how can it serve as the receptacle for urine and dung? If water is God, how can you account for its tendency to fall down, and how can it be contained in the palm of a person's hand? If fire is God, how is it that it can be extinguished, and how can it eat all kinds of things indiscriminately? If the wind is God, how can it be content to remain as the ruler of just one corner of the universe? If space is God, how can it be destroyed by the pramathas at the time of the dissolution? Can the unstable sun, which constantly moves about, be God? If the moon is God, how can he wane as the days go by? If the soul is the creator of everything, how can it suffer the pains and pleasures of life? If any of these are gods, how can they undergo birth and death?

"Karma has no consciousness, and the doer of karma is a fool. When an injustice is done, who will be the judge who can punish the wrongdoers? If anyone punishes a person who has committed an injustice, won't he himself be bound by the karma of his own action in doing so? Therefore, there must be someone who is beyond karma and thus capable of sending people to judgment. Īśa is the lord of karma. He bestows the results of karma. He is none other than Uma's husband.

"If karma is really the cause of everything, how was it that Dakṣa was killed while performing a meritorious sacrifice? Conversely, Kāṭakoṭa[86] killed his own father, and he would have to be bound by his bad karma. How then, if he were not the lord of karma, did Mṛḍa grant him Kailāsa?

"All these weak arguments—that everyone is bound by good and bad karma—are nonsense. Śruti repeatedly insists that Rudra is the only God. Therefore, our God is the cause of everything. Hari and the other gods simply serve Īśa as guards in the five enclosures.[87] How can they be called creators? They do no more than the jobs that they are assigned. They are his servants. They are only responsible for what he assigns them to do. They are in no way responsible for the results. Only Black Neck is the doer of doers. What more proof do you need?

"In village after village one finds Hari and the others surrounding Parameśa and serving as his retinue. Are these idols equal to the liṅga who has no idol form? Are these individuals who are characterized by pollution, cruelty, and evil karma equal to the God whose body is pure, eternal, and without karma? Are these Siddhas,[88] Buddhists, and other unclean beings equal to the pure, famous, and eternal body? Are these gods who are born and die equal to the God of gods who neither dies nor is born? Are Brahma, Indra, Hari, and the other beings equal to the one who controls the rope that ties up Brahma and Māya? Are these timid servants equal to Śaṅkara, who wears bones around his neck? Are all of these gods, who are destroyed in every dissolution, equal to Rudra, who causes the dissolution? Are these corpses who can be destroyed by a sage's curse equal to the lotus feet of the one who causes the destruction of the universe? Are these attendants who conduct his worship equal to the worshipful, preeminent liṅga? Are Siri Vāsudeva[89] and the other gods equal to Mahādeva, who is the Lord of Śrīśailam? Are these two-eyed gods equal to the three-eyed god? Are these bodies who were threatened by deadly poison equal to the mighty one who destroyed the deadly poison? Are these gods who were threatened by the demons of the three cities equal to the hero who was able to destroy the demons of the three cities? These gods were terrified by demons like Andhaka; are they equal to the god who killed him? Are Viṣṇu and Brahma equal to the God who wears their skulls and bones? Are gods who were born to Devaki[90] and others equal to the God who has no birth? Are these servile gods who reside in the liṅga equal to the liṅga that has the universe as his soul? Are those with limited knowledge equal to the God who knows everything? Are these lords of limited domains equal to the God who is the lord of everything? Is it possible to compare these dishonorable gods to Sŏḍḍaladeva, to Someśa? He is called Hara, Sarveśvara, Abhava, Śiva, Parama, Paśupati, Parameśvara, and Mahādeva. Do any other gods in the world have such names? It is said, 'It is superior to Viṣṇu';[91] he has a position that is even higher than Viṣṇu. Śruti says, 'Learned men constantly see it.'[92] Those who have absolved their karma have found

Īśa. Evil people follow the prescriptions of karma. Is it because they are deluded, or is it because they have drunk dog's milk? Have they eaten millet sprouts and lost their wits?

"O King, do not listen to these Tamil brahmins.[93] Is Viṣṇu indestructible and without rebirth? It was because of Bhṛgu's curse that Acyuta had to be born ten times.[94] The *Sāmaveda* says, 'Viṣṇu is born of the grandfather.'[95] And so grandfather Brahma gave birth to Viṣṇu. Is it not because Hari was born from Aja's anus that he is called Adhokṣaja? Not only that, isn't it true that Brahma was born to Aditi as Indra's brother?[96] In the *dvāpara* age Viṣṇu was born as Bādarāyaṇa.[97] In that same age he was born as Kṛṣṇa. Whenever one Viṣṇu was annihilated, someone else came forward to ask Īśvara for the Viṣṇu position[98] and became a Viṣṇu.

"Where is he now, and how many more times will he be born? O King, listen while I tell you about his births. Don't dismiss what I say as nothing but a counterargument. Look at the śruti. Dūrvāsa kicked Viṣṇu, and so he bears a scar on his chest. Didn't Śiva hitch Hari and Rukmiṇi to a cart and make them pull it? When Upamanyu drank the nectar ocean, he swallowed Viṣṇu and spit him out. Didn't the demon called Jalandhara[99] cut Hari off in the sky? Didn't Keśava sleep in a fort because he was beaten by Jarāsandha? Hasn't everyone heard how the elephant demon and the other *rākṣasas*, three, captured Viṣṇu? When Viṣṇu tried to use his discus to kill Dadhīci, he broke it with his back and attacked Viṣṇu, who then fled with his hair flying. Didn't the ass, which is known as the untouchable among animals, save the life of the god with lotus eyes?[100] When Hara drank poison and allowed nectar to be produced, didn't Hari lose his masculinity and become like a woman? Isn't it because he killed Bali and took his land that Hari lost his reputation and fell in the water? After Rāma lost his wife and sinned by killing a brahmin, didn't he go around the world to atone for it? When a boya struck Viṣṇu with an arrow, he died.[101] Everybody knows that, but why talk about it? Didn't he steal butter from the herdsmen? And didn't he whore around with their wives? Didn't he get caught and vacillate with every breath that Nandīśvara took? Didn't the liṅga humble him when Hari thought he was the lord of the whole universe? Didn't Śārjñi[102] worship Mṛḍa in the form of a cloud for many ages when he wanted a son? Didn't the enemy of the god with the fish standard kill the fish avatār and wrap him around his head? Doesn't the tortoise avatār's skull hang in the middle of Hara's necklace? Doesn't Īśvara hold the tusk of the boar avatār in his hand? Śaṅkara took the from of a śarabha, and now he wears the skin of the man-lion whom he slew. Śaṅkara used the dwarf Trivikrama's backbone as a *khaṭvāṅga* weapon. It is Viṣṇu's corpse that the god with angry eyes wears on his shoulder. Is it not Viṣṇu's eye that the God of gods has on his footstool? Hasn't Mṛḍa stabbed Viṣvaksena[103] and hoisted him up on his spear? In the form of a juggler, Keśava bled before the god with an eye on his forehead. That is why śruti talks of 'He who killed Hari.'[104] When Rudra slew Hari, he became known as Harihara.[105] Hara the Kāma Killer absorbs sins.

"Śruti says, 'The head of Yajña was broken.'[106] When Keśava killed the deity of the sacrifice, Vīrabhadra followed him in a rage and cut off his head at the ceremony. Didn't he cut off Viṣṇu's head at the god's sacrifice? But why just talk about Viṣṇu? Has anyone opposed Kāma Killer and lived? Were Hari and the other gods able to lift the straw that the *yakṣa* laid down?[107] When Brahma grew overly proud, Śiva cut off his fifth head. When Aja lusted after his own daughter who was in the form of a deer, he was slain by Rudra in the form of a hunter. Then, when Brahma's son became overly proud, Hara turned him into a camel. And wasn't Vyāsa's hand cut off because he raised it to salute Vāsudeva as God? When Rāvaṇa became too proud, Malahara suppressed him with his big toe. Everybody knows that Kāma is burned every year because he opposed Malahara. For Śveta's sake, he pierced Yama with his spear and caused consternation among the gods. When Dakṣa grew too proud, he lost his head and had to replace it with the head of a ram. Bhagāditya proudly called himself the ruler of the entire universe, and he had his eyes plucked out. When Pūṣa reviled Śiva, a gaṇa named Rudra broke out his teeth. When the wind god claimed to be the life breath of the universe, Śiva broke his legs. Pāvaka lost his arms and tongues when he accepted a traitor's offerings.[108] Vīrabhadra angrily cut off Aditi's nose and the hand of the king of the gods. When the Moon arrived for the sacrifice, Śiva suppressed him with his big toe. At the same sacrifice, he cut off Sarasvati's nose. When Gaṅga was flooding the three worlds and cutting down all the proud gods, he took her on his head like a garland of jasmine. When the three cities were roaming free and dazzling everyone, the slayer of the three cities burned them to ashes. Although Śeṣa is capable of bearing the whole world, Śiva wears him as a signet ring on his finger. Didn't Hara swallow the poisonous fire like one swallows a rose apple? Didn't he kill Andhaka, the elephant demon, Vyāghra, Lāla, Jalandhara, and the rest?

"But what need is there for Īśvara to do all of this? A single gaṇa could do it all! All it takes to destroy the three worlds, regenerate them, and make them flourish is one Śiva gaṇa. If that is true, is there any end to Mahādeva's greatness? He is the eternal one. Everyone else is impermanent. All good people will bear witness to the truth of what I say.

The necklace made of Hari's and Brahma's bones is visible evidence that Īśa is the creator of everything. Because he was initiated into the Śaiva creed by the sage Upamanyu, Viṣṇu himself wears a sapphire liṅga, which he puts in his box and worships. Every day Viṣṇu worshiped Śiva with a thousand lotuses, but one day there was one lotus too few. So he cut out his own lotus eye and worshiped Śiva with that. That was when he received his new eye and a discus.

"In his fish incarnation, Viṣṇu established Matsyakeśvara in Laṅka and worshiped him. In Dorasamudra, Kūrmanātha was worshiped by the tortoise avatār. When Lord Rāma built a bridge, he worshiped Lord Rāmanātha. In ancient times in Kṣīrārāma,[109] Viṣṇu worshiped Rāmeśvara. In Dvārāvati[110] he is called Govindeśa because he was worshiped there by Govinda. In Alampūru,[111] Brahma devotedly set up Brahmeśvara and worshiped him without ceasing. On the summit of Puṣpagiri,[112] Indra set up Indreśa and worshiped him. In Vāraṇāsi, Vyāsa set up Vyāseśvara and worshiped him. In Vāraṇāsi, the demons, gods, and sages set up liṅgas in their own names and worshiped them.

"He is unborn, endless, the great giver. Can anyone else give you everything that you want? Has anyone ever gotten anything from Viṣṇu, Brahma, or the leaders of the Jains? Listen to what Īśvara has done for Hari, Viriñci, and the gods, demons, humans, eagles, serpents, and sages. And listen to all the desires that Īśvara has publicly satisfied for the gaṇas.

"When Bāṇa[113] worshiped him by offering his two hands, Śiva gave those two hands back to him. When Kālidāsa[114] gave his two eyes to Śiva, Śiva returned them. Didn't Śivanāgumayya[115] give his eyes every Monday? When the sun god was not able to cure Mayūra's[116] leprosy, Śiva cured it. When Hari was unable to cure Daṇḍi's[117] terrible leprosy, Śiva did so. When he was in everyone's favor, Śiva gave the wealth that comes from austerities to Deḍara Dāsayya. At the time of the incense offering, he took Ohiḷa to his city to the accomplishment of bells. Everybody knows how he showered gold on Karikāla Coḍa. Because of Kummara Guṇḍayya's devotion, he restored his youth. Even the pramathas were surprised when he gave up his own throne to Cerama. He gave Nimmavva permission to plunder the world of the pramathas for seven days. He took the animals that Jŏmmayya killed to Kailāsa. After Rĕmmayya had been dead for seven days, he brought him back to life. He took Malayarājayya bodily away on a bier. He also took away Kumārapāla Ghūrjara, who had conquered the cycle of birth and death, along with his retinue. Didn't he take Piḷḷa Nāyanāru and the people of his village into himself? Everyone knows that he took Varagoṇḍa Perumāni to Kailāsa. Śaṅkara took Nambi and his cymbals to Kailāsa. He set up thrones for the sixteen gaṇas. And didn't he have mercy on the thirteen gaṇas and show his approval of their heroic devotion? When the *cencu* laid awake all night for an animal, didn't he get the benefits of Śivarātri? The stories of true devotees are endless. Why bother to recite them all? You know that he has given everything that they want to the famed Maḍivālu Mācayya, Kinnarayya, and the other devotees.

"It is a sin to listen to false statements like 'There is someone equal to Kāma Killer. Śiva is the one soul that is everything. Just like Śiva is the form of Viṣṇu. The three gods are all one. The eight forms are all Rudras.' It is a sin to equate evil men to devotees. If you have any counterarguments, let's hear them."

They bowed their heads and looked at the earth. They forgot their bodies as if they had lost their desires. They lost their strength and grew weary. They lost their breath. Their jaws locked. They were unable to swallow or throw up.

When the evil king looked at them and asked for their response, he, too, was put to shame. All the logicians were humbled. It was as if he had been called a dog for having barked like a dog.

"Is Bācayya just like any other mortal? No, he is actually Three Eyes."

Bijjala leaped up, and he and all the little logicians at once left the court. Then all the people praised the power of Bācayya, Basava, and the assembly of pure devotees. And Bācayya remained as always manifesting true devotion.

All the followers of the heroic māheśvara tradition who read, listen to, or praise the splendid history of Bācayya will gain the comfort that comes through great devotion, natural devotion to the liṅga, and the power of the great Śaiva tradition.

You enjoy the experience of singing the stories of the ancient devotees! You follow the esoteric path that is given in the great śāstras, purāṇas, Vedas, and Vedānta! You have the pleasure that is born of humility, devotion, and the surrender of body, mind, and riches! You are comfortable because of your humility and grace! You meditate on the guru that dwells in your own mind! You are my friend! You are called Saṅga! Your character is good!

This is the work of the good poet and fortunate soul Pālkuriki Somanātha, who enjoys the fragrance of the lotus feet of the innumerable māheśvaras and who is immersed in the ambrosial ocean of pleasure that is derived from the blessings of the jaṅgama liṅga. It has benefited greatly from the poetic spirit graciously bestowed by Karasthali Viśvanātha.

This is the sixth chapter of the story that is known as the *Basava Purāṇa*.

CHAPTER VII

O Saṅga, you perform good deeds, and you have found shelter in the sacred feet of Black Neck.

There was a bright and famous man called Śivanāgumayya[1] who was a Great Devotee—the best of Black Neck devotees. Basava was very devoted to him, and he bathed in the ocean of comfort that is derived from devotion.

Being thoroughly disgusted with the situation, the brahmins went to the king's court and spoke these words: "Listen carefully! Basava calls these people Great Devotees, and he elevates them and falls at their feet. He even eats their leftover food. When he is through with that, he starts acting like a gentleman again and comes back and joins you. He even comes right into the inner parts of your palace. But on the other hand, when you happen to go out into the streets of the city, those same people do not pay a bit of attention to you.

"But why talk specifically about these crude sorts? The entire capital city of Kalyāṇa is being taken over by untouchables. What has happened to the caste system, and what has become of morality? What has happened to dharma? How can we allow such things to go on? If the king does not discipline the people of his realm, he will be the sinner. But if the brahmin advisers do not warn the king, the king's sin will turn to them. Therefore, O King, we have come to tender our advice. Once we have done so, we are free from blame. Dharma is what the king consents to. Don't you know that, O King?"

When he heard this, the king was enraged and summoned Basava. But Basava seated Śivanāgumayya in a peerless palanquin[2] and came to the court holding his hand.

When the brahmins saw them coming, they said, "Look at that, O King, Basava is bringing him along. He is going to bring an untouchable here! He does not act a bit afraid to be bringing an untouchable in a palanquin. Doesn't he fear anyone at all?"

Angrily the king prevented the two from entering the door of the inner chambers. Instead he held court outside.

Without the slightest hesitation, Basava spread his upper cloth on the ground as a seat for Śivanāgumayya. "Why have you called me, O King?" he asked.

With mounting rage, Bijjala said, "Are the distinctions between the eighteen castes[3] of recent origin? Is it right for you to mix castes? You have polluted the entire city of Kaḷyāṇa. Is devotion to the god with an eye on his forehead known only to you. You sinner, do you think that the rains will continue to fall upon us? Will the land on which you dwell continue to be fertile?[4] But why even talk about it anymore? We are afraid of you."

Then Basava, the teacher of true devotion, spoke bravely to the king: "Lord of men, it was these same brahmins who once resolved to raise the tanner woman Gŏḍagara[5] Mācaladevi to the level of the supreme caste. They placed the woman in a golden cow[6] and filled it to the brim with milk. Then they declared that she was no longer who she had been, and they themselves bowed down to the woman. But they did not stop with that. No, then they took the polluted milk that was left over from the bath of that unfortunate woman who was living on the outskirts of the village and drank it down without finding it the slightest bit disgusting. But why say any more about that? Without any hesitation they took the golden cow and cut it into pieces as if they were getting ready to cook it.[7] And they divided it up among themselves, slapping each other's hands as they did so.

"The jaw went to the Somādis.[8] The rump went to the Caturvedis. The backbone went to the Upāddelayya. The tail went to the Brahmavidvāmsas. The ribs went to the Ṣaḍaṅgis. The neck[9] and the chest went to the Prabhākarabhaṭs. The belly, the thin bones, and the side bones went to the Vyākaraṇas. The spotted whisk of the tail went to the Trivedis. The hide and the other assorted parts went to the foreign students. And so the people of this cow-killing village enjoyed themselves.

"Does it make any sense to listen to these mālas[10] of the sacred thread, these downright mālas? Which is the more ancient, the Vedas or the laws that have been made by Brahma? And what do the Vedas say about caste? According to the Vedas, there are only two castes—*pravartaka*[11] and *nivartaka*. A person who undergoes the rituals of the bhavis is a pravartaka. One who undergoes the rituals of Śiva is a nivartaka. This is the essence of the Vedas. Why dwell on the caste order, which has only recently been established? The eighteen castes have been set up according to the dictates of Brahma. Why even discuss them? The caste of devotees is superior to all the eighteen castes. Just as gold turns into a useless clod when an unlucky person touches it, the devotee who is a replica of Śiva looks like an ordinary man to a bhavi. Is it possible for the likes of you to have any proper estimation of the devotee's greatness? Can a dog be compared to a lion? Can a village pig be compared to an elephant? Can ordinary puddles be compared to the ocean? Can rivulets be compared to the sacred Gaṅga? Can a swarm of fireflies be compared to the sun? Can the stars be compared to the moon? Can hillocks be compared to Mount Meru? Can a thorn bush be compared to the *pārijāta*[12] tree? O King, no more can these brahmins be compared to Śivanāgumayya.

"Didn't Śrīpatipaṇḍita[13] say, 'If anyone says that even ten million brahmins are equal to one devotee, I will cut out his tongue.' And to prove what he said, didn't he tie up live coals in a cloth in front of King Anantapāla?[14]

"What more is there to say? Haven't you heard that these brahmins are not even equal to the dogs in the houses of the devotees?"

The Story of Kallidevayya

"In a village called Hāvinahāḷa lived a great soul called Kallidevayya who was a veritable incarnation of Lord Rudra and no ordinary man. In that village there was a snake that killed any outsider who spent the night there. It had once bitten Kallidevayya, but it had died. Being compassionate, Kallidevayya brought the snake back to life and remained in the village.

"One day when his maidservant was going to fetch water, a brahmin touched her with his hand. Immediately she threw down the earthen pot from her head and buried it then and there. She then put ashes on her body, got a new pot, and went out once more.

"When they saw what she had done, the brahmins said, 'Look at this arrogant woman! She is blind with pride! When a good brahmin touched her, she threw down her earthen pot, got a new one, and went again to get water. Since when is it wrong for brahmins to touch others? According to dharma, it is others who are not supposed to touch brahmins!'

"Then they called Kallidevayya, the Rudra of the kali age, and spoke these twisted words: 'We have never before heard anyone speak ill of you in this village, Kallidevayya. No one has ever disparaged you. Everywhere we go, we only hear how you brought that serpent back to life. We saw you at that time, and now we have the pleasure of seeing you again. But even though we have not seen you in the meantime, we have always regarded you as a good man.

" 'But now your boya woman has humiliated us. The man was not just a young brahmin. He was a great scholar, a virtual incarnation of Vasiṣṭha,[15] Dāmodara Yajva of the Vedula family. He and Trivikrama Somayāji went into the lane by the temple to get wood for the sacrificial fire, and she must have been crazy and come their way. Then your maidservant claimed that he had touched her, and at once broke the pot that she carried on her head. Now listen, it used to be said that when a śūdra touched a brahmin, the brahmin had to take a bath without even taking off his clothes. Has there ever been anything said to the effect that these people of despicable caste should not be touched by a twice-born? What kind of morals are these? What kind of dharma is this? What purāṇa ever said it? What kind of devotion is this? Do you expect us to tolerate such a thing?

" 'It was only because the brahmin did not think it appropriate that he refrained from killing the woman right there on the spot. Is it right to make rules that have never been accepted? What more can we say?'

"Kallidevayya responded without a moment's hesitation. 'When even dogs in the devotees' houses are not to touch you, how can a devotee's servant touch you? Are you really brahmins? According to the words, "A brāhmaṇa is one who acts in Brahman," can you be classed as brahmins? Just tell me what Parabrahma[16] means, and that will be sufficient. Whether you call him Parameśvara, Paramātma, or Parabrahma, he is Hara. How can you use the term *para* for anyone else? Since *para* means "supreme," you cannot use it for anyone else! How do you think Hari and Brahma can become supreme souls? According to the Vedas and śāstras, Hari and all the rest are merely living souls. Hara is the supreme Brahman and true devotees are those who act in Brahman. Hari, Brahma, and Indra are all but devotees who worship the supreme, aren't they?

" 'Śruti says, "The lord of Brahma is the lord of brāhmaṇa."[17] What then is the true path of Brahma, and is it appropriate to touch you, to think of you, and to talk with you? Don't you know how a śūdra birth is absolved? Can you point to rituals other than those of Rudra? Does śruti have any other author except Rudra? Are you equal to Mṛḍa's devotees? If you have any arguments to give, open your mouths and let us hear them.'

" 'What is the meaning of this? You are making us out to be less than dogs. Did your girl do right? You are like a grub hoe that strikes at the root. The more we hear, the more it looks as if you are using a large thorn to remove a small one. If you can, bring your dog here and have him chant a chapter or even a single verse of the Veda,' said the brahmins angrily.

"When he heard these words, Kallidevayya looked at the brahmins and said, 'The dogs in our devotees' houses can easily sing the Vedas. They are as easy as mortar and pestle songs.'[18] And with a smile on his face he snapped his fingers and called a dog that looked like the great grandfather of the Vedas.

"He clicked his tongue and said, 'Come, O eater of Śaṅkara's leftovers. Come, O yogi who uses the *praṇava* mantra. Come, O you who are supported by the āgamas. Come, O you who have all your sins absolved. Come, O valiant one. Come, O you who are steadfast and have no rebirth.'

"When he called, the dog came and bowed before him. Then he spoke to it softly, saying, 'Lift up your voice. I want you to chant a bit of any one of the Vedas for these brahmins.'

"When Kallidevayya had made his request, the dog, which was none other than Rudra himself disguised in dog's skin, sat in the lotus posture, put Black Throat in his lotus heart, and gathered the primal śakti into himself. He then took into himself the power of the sun and the moon. He focused his eyes on the tip of his nose. With a voice that was sweet and beautiful, and with a clear tone, a pure note, and proper pronunciation of the three sounds, he uttered the syllable *om*.

"Meanwhile all the brahmins fell prostrate on the ground before him. With correct pronunciation of the *udātta*, *anudātta*, and the *svarita*,[19] he recited the *pada*,[20] *krama*, *pāṭa*, and *jaṭa*. And he chanted by taking a section from each of the four Vedas.

"Then Kallidevayya leaped to his feet and said, 'Enough, O grandfather of the Vedas.' And he brought the dog's vedic chanting to a halt. 'Did you hear that with your own ears, O brahmins? Did you see with your own eyes the power of the devotees?'

"In this way, Kallidevayya had the Vedas publicly recited by a dog. But that was not all! In Siddha Rāmayya's house lived another dog named Ughĕkāḷikāḍu. That dog was the guru of this dog. Even I do not know how great that dog was. Be that as it may, in Jambūru, Mahākāḷayya's dog chanted the Vedas in a debate. How can anyone in the mortal world claim that brahmins are equal to the dogs that dwell in the houses of the devotees?

"A devotee of Śiva called Śivacitta was debating with some brahmins. In the course of the debate, he made the claim that ten million brahmins, even if they were scholars in the Vedas, purāṇas, and śāstras, would not be equal to a single devotee.

"But even though he referred them to the Vedas and śāstras, the brahmins remained unconvinced and said, 'Bringing arguments and quotations just shows your learning in words, but can you show us some visible evidence?'

"When the brahmins persisted, Śivacitta put the sandal of a Great Devotee[21] on one side of a balance, and all the brahmins of the village on the other side. But they were not equal to the sandal. Therefore, brahmins are not even equal to devotees' sandals. What more is there to discuss?"

The Story of Bibba Bācayya

"Śiva himself is incapable of describing the greatness of Bibba Bācayya of Gŏbbūru. Who am I to do so? Listen, O King, and I will tell the grief he served before these brahmins. The prasāda of the jaṅgama liṅga was his body and his life breath. He dwelt in the brahmin sector and was the best among them. But he had rejected the ordinary path of *āśramadharma*,[22] and he now adhered strictly to the vedic path of devotion. Even if it required going two, three, or even ten āmaḍas,[23] he went to attend all the Śaiva rituals. He eagerly wore the soles of devotees' sandals as ornaments on his hands, his neck, his ears, his chest, and his head. He even wore them as his sacred thread. And he wore ashes all over his body.

"He had a cart that was equipped with a basket. He attached Nandi banners all over it. He decorated it with bells—both large and small—gongs, anklets, chowris, and numerous strings of rudrākṣa beads. He adorned the young bulls with gold medals and pendants on their foreheads and affectionately hitched them to it. Shouting 'cāgu! baḷā!' he went forth happily about his business.

"By touching his forehead to the feet of the devotees, he demonstrated his devotion, and he experienced the bliss of associating his head with the dust of their sacred feet. He sipped water that had washed their feet, and taking the prasāda of the divine liṅga, he said, 'I bow down! I bow down, great liṅga!'

"He had the form of the divine guru, he enjoyed the true liṅga, and he was blissful with the pleasure of it. Whatever was left after the devotees finished eating, he gathered up in baskets and piled in his cart. Whenever he heard of such prasāda, he went zealously, with a clean heart, and brought it back to Gŏbbūru. There he acquired great fame by eating it three times a day.

"One day, when the brahmins had already begun to talk, a devotee celebrated a feast in a neighboring village. Bibba Bācayya was very happy, and as was his custom, he set out for the place without delay. He was elated to place his head on the fragrant lotus feet of the jaṅgamas. He sported in the ambrosial ocean of prasāda and got all that he needed. He filled his basket without dropping as much as a crumb on the ground and proceeded to dance around the cart. He raised great bunches of umbrellas. He hoisted dense clusters of banners. He filled the air with sweet, auspicious sounds. It resounded with beautiful music. The 'cāgu! baḷā!' chant rang out constantly. Victory cries filled the air. Shouts were heard. With all these festivities Bibba Bācayya entered Gŏbbūru.

" 'Until today we had only heard about this evil man. But now we have seen him for ourselves,' thought the brahmins.

"So they approached him and said, 'Halt! Just where do you think you are going? What is the meaning of all this? With this cart and all, it looks as if you might be on your way to a wedding. Why have you gone to so much trouble? Has someone mounted an attack? Does this shouting indicate that you are on your way to a battle? Has one of Śaṅkara's devotees died or something? What is the meaning of all this noise and all these umbrellas and banners and all this confusion? You feel proud as if you killed one of your enemies and reduced the other to submission.[24]

" 'Are you on your way to Śiva's city like Cerama?[25] How can you enter the brahmin sector in this polluted state? How can we even come anywhere near you? You have gathered up a bunch of food that has been polluted by low-caste and outcaste saliva, filled your cart with it, and covered it with a cloth. You have made a regular mountain of it. What do you think is so special about all this? Well, we have had enough! Get out of town, with no more of your big talk!'

" 'Bah! Why do you talk so arrogantly? Who do you think you are that you make yourselves out to be better than me? Don't you know what a distance there is between yourselves and the Śaiva devotees? But now you have bitten off more than you can chew. Once you have taken more than you can swallow, your eyes will burst out. Who are you to us? What do we have in common? Why should I stay in this village? You have seen the prasāda of the mobile liṅga and have said that it was polluted. But I tell you, those who abuse the prasāda of the śaraṇas will fall into the hottest fires of hell. Don't you already know that? And must I go on with what will happen to you after that? You are oblivious to the death that approaches you. Are you capable of understanding the immense power of this prasāda? It is ambrosia for the devotees. But to the nondevotees it is the fire of the dissolution. Won't you be burned up like locusts that fall in the fire? You are big talkers, but no great courage is required to kill brahmins like you.'

"When Bibba Bācayya had spoken, the brahmins looked at him in a rage and said, 'What claims are you making for that polluted food? Is it a snake, a tiger, or poison, or some kind of deadly monster?

" 'Hey, Bhaṭṭula Pinna! Hey, Appana Mañca! Hey, Caṭṭana Pĕddi! Hey, Viśastula Kūci! Hey, dirty Dāmodara! Hey, rowdy Bhāskara! Hey, Śiṣṭula Balabhadra! Hey, Cimmi Ketappa![26] Put away your sacred grass and put on your other clothes! Bring your iron-tipped staves! Grab the bulls! Cut their ropes! Surround the cart! Tear up the front! Tear down the banners! Don't let the cart get away,' cried the brahmins.

"When he saw those degraded brahmins, Bibba Bācayya became very angry and shouted, 'Cowards, you are beaten! Why are you getting so excited? Just try looking at this! Get out of here!' And he held them at bay.

"Then, he tore off the cloth that covered the prasāda, and as he thrust his hands into it, there came a color that was like dawn or dusk or lightning. But actually it was flaming fire and burning coals. The brahmins were stricken with fear, and as they were about to bring water to put it out, it blazed up and crackled and roared. Like the fire of Śiva's third eye when it burned up the three cities, it swept through the brahmins' houses, razing them to the ground.

"Śrīdhara Bhaṭṭa's house was burned to ashes. Mādhavappana's house went up in flames. Blind Govinda's hut was burned to the ground. Doḍḍa Bhāskara's house was ignited. Kommana Bhaṭṭu's cottage roared upward. Only the beams of Vāmanappana's house remained. Somayāji's dwelling went the same way. Tredula's house was wiped out. Āditya Kūci's house was ruined. Macca Tāḍana's house succumbed to the flames. Baccali Keśava's shack burned down. The fire consumed Vāsudeva's house. Nothing but ashes was left of Māsa Kommana's house. Sannyāsi Vāmana's monastery and the porch of the vasadi were reduced to ashes. It ignited Kuśadarbha Pinnayya's house and reached the house of the Aśana family. But why should each one be mentioned individually? 'All of the houses were consumed in the flames—all the houses, that is, of those who had abused Śiva,' cried the devotees watching the flames like the pramathas who enjoy conflagration at the end of Time.

"Some of the brahmins were burned up along with their houses, and some died trying to get out of them. Some panicked when their hair caught fire and sought refuge in the temples. When their beards and mustaches burned, some dove into wells. When their clothes caught fire, others sought refuge with the devotees of Kāma Killer. Before being utterly consumed, some sought refuge in the front porches and back yards of Mṛḍa devotees. When their bodies caught fire, others went flaming to the devotees and asked for refuge. When all seemed lost, they stood before Bibba Bācayya and bowed down to him.

"Among the people of Gŏbbūru who were half dead from the burning heat were Pappu Keśavabhaṭṭu, Doppana Pĕddi, Tappakanṭi Aitana, Boppana Tredi, Siṅgarāju Ādĕna, Cippana Kūchi, Maṅgaṇa Ghaḍisāsi, Naṅganna Pinna, Dabbara Ādityuḍu, Sabbanayya, Gabbu Mailāruḍu, Subbana Mañci, Aḍḍagālu Aitana, Doḍḍana Kūci, Boḍḍu Rāghavabhaṭṭu, and Gaḍḍamu Pĕddi.[27]

" 'Kāma Killer's devotees are our refuge,' they said.

" 'We are cattle,' they cried.

" 'We are brahmins, don't kill us,' they prayed.

"They lifted their mouths to the sky and cried out. They wept in confusion. They fainted and fell prostrate on the ground.

" 'We are miserable creatures. We are completely ignorant. We are too proud. We have no redeeming qualities. We are evil. We are degraded. We are engulfed in our own shortcomings. We are the worst of people. We are the most miserable of all. We are complete idiots. We are unnecessarily angry. We have made many mistakes. We are the most despicable of enemies. We are suffering from the fire. Protect us! Please help us! Forgive our many faults! Rid us of our fear! Cool us down,' they said.

" 'Janamejaya granted us this village as a brahmin colony. Won't you resurrect it and give it back to us? Have compassion on us. We are dependent upon your charity,' said the brahmins. And they fell prostrate.

"When they were unable to get up on their own, he asked them to rise. Then he folded his hands before the prasāda and looked at it with great compassion. The fire of the prasāda was extinguished, and it returned to its previous state and looked like ordinary prasāda once again as it rested in his hand. Meanwhile, the brahmin houses returned to their normal state.

"Don't you know about this, O people? This is no ancient story, O King! This happened only a few days back. If one does not worship Three Eyes, he is the most polluted of the polluted, even if he is a brahmin. When a māla worships Śiva, he attains greatness and gains merit in this world as well as in the other world. The Śiva-worshiping māla is not polluted; the real polluted ones are the mālas who wear the sacred thread.[28]

"Did Śiva call Cĕnnayya an untouchable when he ate gruel in his house? When you know the power of Mādara Cĕnnayya,[29] does it make any sense to call our devotees untouchables? Let these worthless brahmins never call them untouchables!"

The Story of Mādara Dūḍayya

"O King, how is it that you have not heard the story of Śiva's famous devotee, Mādara Dūḍayya? Let me tell you about his power.

"There was a brahmin who suffered from leprosy. Once when this brahmin was trying to catch a cow near Dūḍayya's house, he sank up to his thighs in the quagmire produced by the devotee's bath water. When he got out, he washed his legs, and the next morning when he saw them, they were completely restored to what they had once been.

"The brahmin was amazed. At once he ran back to the place where Mādara Dūḍayya took his bath and rolled around in the mud. As he did so, his whole body became bright and clean. Immediately, that brahmin fell on Mādara Dūḍayya's lotus feet, enjoyed his compassion, and went home.

"Hara, Hara,[30] don't you know how the water from Mādara Dūḍayya's bath cured the brahmin's leprosy when he bathed in it? We had heard an old story about how Āditya had his body restored by plunging into the water from the feet of a gaṇa named Manohara, but now we have seen the same sort of thing clearly for ourselves. When the people expressed their amazement and sang his praises, seven hundred brahmins came of their own accord and had their leprosy cured. Haven't you heard about that?"

The Story of Bānasa Bhīmayya

"Haven't you ever heard of the great Bānasa Bhīmayya who healed all the brahmins whose bodies were suffering from leprosy? O King, everyone is praising him. Why do you go around spreading rumors? These brahmins are untouchables because of their being bound up in karma."

The Story of Śvapacayya

"Once there was a brahmin named Sāmavedulu who was traveling through the sky. Meanwhile, in the middle of the forest, a devotee of Īśvara named Śvapacayya[31] was cooking his dinner. When he saw Sāmavedulu, he was afraid that his evil eye might fall on the food, and he attempted to cover it with a sandal. Sāmavedulu laughed aloud at this and thought, 'This hypocrite is a *śvapaca*, and he is cooking meat, but when he sees me, he covers it with a sandal. What a wretch!'

"At once, because of the power of Śvapacayya's mantras, the brahmin's sandals fell off and landed on the earth. When this happened, the brahmin immediately ran to Śvapacayya's lotus feet, bowed down to them, was initiated into the Śaiva creed by him, and became his disciple. Because of the power of Śvapacayya's prasāda, the brahmin was taken to Śiva's heaven. Along with him, he took the inhabitants of thirty-six villages.

"Can anyone follow a new path that did not exist at the time of the ancient gaṇas? Even though a person is a śvapaca, if he has a liṅga, he is equal to the best of brahmins. Even if he is the best of brahmins, if he does not serve Tripurāri, he is worse than the worst of the śvapacas."

The Story of Udbhaṭa

"In the city of Ballaki lived a devotee named Udbhaṭa. He was the guru of a king called Bhojarāja, whom he had initiated into the Śaiva creed. He had defeated all the other religions with arguments from the Vedas and śāstras.

"Jŏmmavva was an untouchable woman who sang for the king, but because she was a good devotee, Udbhaṭa was floating with her on an ocean of blissful devotion.

"But the people were amazed to see this good brahmin involving himself with a casteless woman. And they went and complained to the king. But even though he heard their complaints, he continued to praise Udbhaṭa as before.

"Parameśvara then decided to reveal to the world the power of Udbhaṭa's devotion. So he took him to himself. When Udbhaṭa was cremated, all except one of a group of seven hundred spirits were sitting in a nearby banyan tree, and they followed the smoke to Kailāsa. But one of the spirits had gone out for some food.

"When she returned the next morning and failed to see the rest of the spirits, she wept pitifully. She cried so loudly and so continuously that the whole earth shook. Wondering what was going on, Bhoja and his people came quickly to find out what had happened. They wondered who was crying and why, and when they found out, they asked what they could do for her.

" 'Listen, O King, for twelve thousand years we seven hundred spirits constantly waited on this banyan tree for the death of Udbhaṭa. In that time we never went anywhere. Finally, I was so hungry that I could not stand it any longer, and I went out for something to eat. They say that one who lacks food also lacks companionship, and it proved to be true in my case. Six hundred and ninety-nine spirits touched the smoke from Udbhaṭa's funeral pyre and went to Kailāsa. But I missed out on the path and remain trapped on the earth to suffer.

" 'O great King, it is like carefully giving birth and then giving the little ones away to a fox. O King, it is like going to great pains to raise a crop and then climbing down from the watchtower. O King, it is like going through hard labor only to give birth to a dead baby. O King, it is like filling a pot with water and having it break. All those years of waiting were a waste of time. How can I help grieving, O King? But even now it is not too late. Put some more wood on the fire, and, I tell you, I will go by the way of that smoke.

" 'Now listen! Just to prove that I have really gone to Kailāsa, I will pull up this banyan tree by the roots and in full view of everyone take it to Kailāsa,' said the spirit.

"All the people were amazed to hear this. And their ruler rejoiced and agreed to the request. Quickly they piled up a heap of sandalwood. Then they brought heavenly fabrics, made them into a wick, soaked it in clarified butter, lighted it, and thrust it into the fire.

"As the fire roared and the smoke ascended into the banyan tree, Bhoja, his friends, relatives, and sons, and all the people climbed into the tree. When the smoke reached the spirit, she pulled up the tree and took it with her to Kailāsa along with King Bhoja and all the people.

"This is how the power of Udbhaṭa has become famous throughout the three worlds. O King, haven't you heard about it?"

The Story of Kakkayya

"O Lord, there was a devotee of Three Eyes named Kakkayya who was an enemy of the brahmins.

"A scholar sat at the city gate as a purāṇa reader, and, with all the *kāṭĕrukus*[32] listening in amazement, he sang purāṇas. He told the story of how Hara used Brahma's skull as his begging bowl. But he would not narrate the story of how Hara killed Viṣṇu's commander with his spear and how he slew Viṣṇu himself. He sang about how Viṣṇu defeated Bali by growing very large, and how he lifted his foot in the Trivikrama form. But even then he would not tell about how Īśvara broke the spinal cord of that same Trivikrama.

"He told how Vyāsa raised up his hand, but he would not tell how that hand was broken by Śiva, and he would not point out the place where Keśava's head[33] fell when Hara got angry and cut it off at the sacrifice. He told how Viṣṇu took the form of a man-lion and killed Hiraṇyākṣa, but he would not tell how Śiva took the form of a śarabha and destroyed the man-lion by tearing out its bowels.

"He read the part that says that everything is permeated with Viṣṇu and explained it in detail, but he would not mention how Three Eyes destroyed Hari along with everything else. He explained that Hari is the creator of the world, but he would not mention that Īśvara is Hari's lord. He mentioned that Hari also has the name Viśva, but he would not mention that Hara is Viśva's lord. He said that Hari is the supreme, but he would not say that Hara is the Supreme of the supreme. He said that Hari is the great Māya, but he would not say that Hara is the great god. Being ignorant of the real meaning of the word *harihara*, he claimed that Hari and Hara are one and the same. He would not say that Kāma Killer is called Harihara because he killed Hari.[34]

"He was a biased purāṇa reader who would not see things as they really are but simply cried out whatever he pleased.

" 'Anyone who criticizes Śiva must be killed,' said Kakkayya. 'His book must be burned, and I am the one who has to do it!'

"Being enraged with the traitor to Śiva, Kakkayya ripped open his belly with a pruning hook, decapitated him, placed his head in his own belly, slew him, and was fully elated with what he had done.

"The purāṇa reader's body was torn completely to shreds and scattered around like a heap of worms.

"Don't you know the story of that brahmin? Why say more? Don't you know the power of Ḍohara Kakkayya?"

The Story of Bhogayya

"In Kĕmbāvi lived a famous Black Throat devotee named Bhogayya who constantly worshiped jaṅgamas. Black Throat wanted to exalt him, so he came like a stranger carrying the body of a dead calf and wearing the mark of Rudra. Bhogayya fell prostrate before him, relieved him of the dead calf from his neck, brought him into his house, and washed his feet. Pleased with this, that form of Mṛḍa announced, 'I have made a vow to eat the meat of a dead calf, so yesterday I went and asked Deḍara Dāsayya to cook the calf and serve it to me. But he put me off and said that he would go and talk to Duggaḷavva about it. Will you do it for me today?'

" 'Of course, I will,' said Bhogayya. Then he salted the meat, mixed it with pungent and sour flavorings and vegetables, and made several different dishes. These he served to the sacred guest.

"At that point, all the brahmins of the colony gathered together with their sticks and stones and said, 'Let's cut off his head; let's pull off his doors; let's tear down his hut; let's smash him down. If we don't kill this stubborn mādiga, this is no brahmin colony,' raged the brahmins.

"At that point, Hara disappeared, and Bhogayya angrily shouted, 'You accuse everybody of being last-born. If even first-borns are not able to enter the houses of devotees, how can last-borns enter? If you revile Śiva's devotees, you will enter the worst of hells. It is wrong even to touch you, see you, or talk to you. Liars, take these houses, these jobs, and this village. Put them on your own heads. We and our patrons are leaving.' Then he left.

"When he got to the outskirts of the village, all the liṅgas of Kĕmbāvi followed Bhogayya like a great mountain of liṅgas. There were Śiva liṅgas from the Śaiva houses. There were consecrated liṅgas from the temples. There were self-born liṅgas and primal liṅgas. There were liṅgas who left their thrones, and there were liṅgas who battered down their own doors. There were liṅgas who went out through the drain spouts. There were liṅgas who knocked the flower stone aside and left. There were hidden liṅgas from wells. There were liṅgas who shouted and enjoyed themselves as they bounded along. There were liṅgas who strove to outdo each other as they ran along. While everybody watched, there were some liṅgas who rolled along. There were liṅgas who flew through the sky. There were liṅgas who went along on the earth. There were liṅgas who moved with the speed of the wind. There were also liṅgas who barely crept along.

"When all the liṅgas of Kĕmbāvi followed Bhogayya, they looked like a huge liṅga mountain. And when all the devotees danced and played and followed along, the town became desolate. The earth quaked. The crops dried up. The trees fell to the ground. The stars came out. The dwellings were engulfed in darkness. The cooked food rotted. The waters of the wells, ponds, and lakes evaporated. The fruit and flowers of the forest blackened. The birds and beasts began to wail. The earth was scorched. The wind kicked up dust. In the midst of these catastrophes, the brahmins and the other people realized that when Bhogayya left, the liṅgas of the village had gone along with him. And they recognized their departure as the cause of everything that had happened. So they grieved and sought refuge. And with cries of praise, they fell prostrate before Bhogayya and begged him to return.

" 'Protect us! We are sinners! You are our only protection, Bhogayya! We are dependent upon your charity,' they said, bowing their heads.

"When the obstinate brahmins had been utterly humiliated and brought down, Bhogayya granted them refuge. Then he returned to Kĕmbāvi with the liṅgas while all the people praised him.

"As if they meant to serve as an edict for devotion, each liṅga quickly occupied another Śaiva temple. The small liṅgas rested on large bases, and the large liṅgas rested on small bases. The liṅga of the Bhīma temple entered the Rāma temple, and the liṅga of the Rāma temple entered the Bhīma temple. The crystal liṅgas sat on the stone pedestals, and the stone liṅgas sat on the crystal pedestals. And they remained there as visible evidence for the people. Aren't these displaced liṅgas sufficient proof that the liṅgas followed Bhogayya of Kĕmbāvi? And doesn't this prove that the devotees of Malahara are people of good caste?"

The Story of Guḍḍavva

"O King, there was a female devotee named Guḍḍavva whom people called Great Devotee. She had leprosy so badly that her limbs would have fallen off had anyone touched them. She was in terrible shape.

"One day she was walking along the streets of Āvindigĕ when the brahmins said, 'You wretched jaṅgama woman, coming right through the brahmin colony! Stop! Stop where you are!'

"Guḍḍavva looked at the sinful brahmins, cursed them and vowed, 'I am going to go to Saurāṣṭra. And I am not going to enter this village until my body is restored to health.'

"With the lord of her life breath in her heart, she set out for Saurāṣṭra. As she walked along, her feet became so sore that she was unable to take another step. So she began to crawl on her knees. When her hands and knees became too sore to support her, she commenced rolling along the path. Finally, her entire body was broken into pieces.

"At that point, Kāma Killer compassionately took his own shape and came from Saurāṣṭra and met her. Then Śiva changed her body into a divine body. When she bowed to him in gratitude, Śiva kindly requested her to ask for whatever she wanted and told her that he appreciated her devotion.

"She replied, 'You are approachable only through pure thought. And my life has been fulfilled by seeing your lotus feet. But that is not all! My terrible disease has been cured at the same time! Three Eyes, why should I bother to ask for anything more? Is there any fool who would wash dirt for tiny pieces of metal, when a huge source of gold is close by? Great giver, just stay here with me; that is all I want. I do not want to bother about asking for anything else.'

"When she had spoken, Someśa responded by taking the form of a marvelous liṅga and remained there in Āvindigĕ. And the fame of Guḍḍavva spread throughout the world. Not only that, because of the power of the woman's devotion, which Īśvara himself was unable to measure, the bodies of the brahmins who had ridiculed her became consumed with leprosy. And while everyone praised her, Guḍḍavva remained the very source of devotion. Therefore, how can you call Forehead Eye's devotees low caste, O King?

"Once a liṅga has been dedicated in a temple, can you call it a stone instead of a liṅga? Similarly, once a person has been initiated into the eternal liṅga, you can no longer call that person a last-born. It is just as bad to inquire into the life history of Hara's devotees as it is to call Hara a stone! O King, when a crow touches the golden mountain, it acquires a golden color. When a worm is touched by a bee, it loses its former body.[35] When rivers flow into the ocean, is it ever possible to tell which one is which? Doesn't base copper become pure gold when it comes into contact with the alchemist's mercury? At the touch of the guru's hand, the last-born and the first-born become one caste.

"It is said that Uma is the mother and that Rudra is the father. How do you discriminate between children of one mother? If a gem is covered by a dirty cloth, does that destroy the value of the gem? Even if a devotee of Hara is born into a low caste, does that diminish his greatness? Even though a lotus springs forth from the mud, is it not worthy of worship? Even though fire is born out of dry wood, is it not respected as being sacred? Whatever bad caste he might have been borne into, a devotee of Śiva is always pure. Vyāsa is the guru of all these brahmins, but wasn't he born to a boya woman?[36] Vasiṣṭha was the guru of all the ancient brahmins, but was he not born to a whore named Ūrvaśi?[37] Wasn't the brahmin sage Mataṅga born to an outcaste woman? In fact, haven't all the great sages who were born to dogs, asses, fish, parrots, and frogs, O King, achieved superior status from their devotion to Śiva? You know all about them, don't you?"

When he heard these words, Bijjala became very angry and addressed Basava like this: "You are never tired of your perverse and useless words, songs, and stories. If you cut a devotee, will you find milk? And if you cut anyone else, will you find only blood? We are completely unfamiliar with the things you are talking about." Then Basava rose up in anger and said, "There are evil traitors to Śiva who follow many paths, denying Bharga. There are brahmin asses who are overcome with the weight of the Vedas. There are depraved ritualists who have never received instruction in the sacred syllable. There are karmic untouchables who have been burned in the fires of the curses of Dadhīci and other sages. There are cruel beasts who catch animals and kill them by taking their life breath.[38] There are people who make a living on rituals and will do anything for a little money. And, finally, there are brahmins who get drunk on *soma*, which is the same as liquor! But why talk about these evil people who kill animals and then claim that it was the sacrifice that killed them? It is a sin to have discourse with all such people, but if I refrain, it will not be good for the cause of devotion.

"Right now, I am going to show you milk in the hand of Śivanāgumayya. Meanwhile, you cut the best of your brahmins and show whether they even have water in their bodies. If they fail, let these evil people be driven around the capital city with logs tied to their feet."

With King Bijjala's permission, Emperor Basava[39] went and fell prostrate on the earth before the lotus feet of Śivanāgumayya. With his liṅgapasāyita weapon ready, Basava joyfully took Nāgumayya's lotus hand in his and cut it. At once, milk spouted into the sky as if the all-giving cow of devotion to Śiva were giving milk to Basava through its udder. Once upon a time, Śambhu compassionately showered gold on Karikāla Coḍa. But that day a shower of divine ambrosia fell on Basava by order of the god who is kind to the devotees.

Ordinarily, a body is filled with three kinds of impurities, but his body was completely pure. How else could the body of a low-caste person be free of blood and flesh?

Nāgumayya's divine, ambrosial body shone while all the devotees watched blissfully in devotion to the liṅga. In fact, Bijjala himself bowed and fell prostrate at the feet of Nāgumayya.

Meanwhile, all the inhabitants of the world cried "Victory!" and bowed down devotedly, saying, "We are senseless beasts. We have lost our minds. We are unintelligent. We have been too proud. You have promised protection to everyone who asks. Great soul, don't forget your vow."

When the brahmins asked for refuge, Nāgumayya smiled compassionately upon them, and Basava brought a great elephant and had him mount it.[40] Then Basava himself got up behind Nāgumayya and together they went happily to their houses.

Whosoever hears, reads, or copies the pure story of Śivanāgumayya will gain the power of true devotion and the four objectives of mankind.

The Devotees of Kaḷyāṇa

In Kaḷyāṇa, there were devotees who were the very images of Rudra and likenesses of the elephant–demon slayer. They were Maḍivālu Mācayya,[41] Mādirājayya, Baḍavara Brahmayya, Bācirājayya, Kinnara Brahmayya, Keśirājayya, Kannada Brahmayya, Kallidevayya, Moḷiga Mārayya, Musiḍi Cauḍayya, Śūlada Brahmayya, Suriya Cauḍayya, Kalaketa Brahmayya, Kakkayya, Tĕlugeśu Masanayya, Tĕlugu Jŏmmayya, Śāntadevuḍu, Jammayya, Bāsavantu Kesayya, Ekānta Rāmayya, Uttamāṅgadakeśi, Hŏnnayya, Gaṇḍagattĕra Nācayya, Kālāgnirudri, Sṛṅgi Bŏppayya, Siguru Candayya, Ḍiṅgari Mallayya, Saṅgameśvaruḍu, Kadirĕ Rĕmmayya, Mahākāḷayya, Padumarasu, Purāṇada Māyibhaṭṭu, Udarada Rāmayya, Yogidevayya, Udayamarasu, Hŏnnayya, Dhavaḷayya, Bontādevi, Savarada Cikkayya, Sārĕnāyaḍu, Śivamuddudevuḍu, Sikkadevuḍu, Śivarātri Saṅgayya, Avimugatayya, Caṇḍeśu Cāmayya, Muṇḍa Brahmayya, Baṇḍiya Revaṇṇa, Iṇḍĕ Somanna, Hāṭakeśvaruni Brahmayya, Mahābala, Koṭeśu Cāmayya, Gŏggayya, Dummada Brahmayya, Dhūrjaṭi Keśi, Ĕmmĕ Saṅgayya, Kapileśu Vissayya, Noṇimeśu Cikkayya, Nuluka Candayya, Gaṇadāsi Mādanna, Gaṇṭi Mallayya, Murahāṭa Ketayya, Haravi Hollayya, Girigīṭu Siṅgayya, Guruja Kāḷavva, Bānasa Bhīmayya, Bhāskarayya, Gŏniya Mallayya, Gŏggayya, Allayya, Madhupayya, Animiṣa Keśi, Hŏllayya, Goḍala Mallayya, Olĕ Brahmayya, Karahāḷa Mallayya, Bāla Brahmayya, Paṇihāri Bāci, Kavilĕ Brahmayya, Bandikāra Mallayya, Avakara Ketayya, Śivanāgumayya, Nijaliṅga Cikkayya, Nirlajja Śānti, Nijabhāvuḍu, Nityanemadamaili, Aṅka Brahmayya, Karahāḷa Brahmayya, Suṅkeśu Baṅkayya, Lĕṅka Mañcayya, Eleśu Brahmayya, Īḍĕ Brahmayya, Mailana Brahmayya, Māyidevayya, Cakkĕra Brahmayya, Śaraṇayya, Cikka Brahmayya, Sirigirayya, Vīra Mārayya, Vīra Liṅgayya, Vīra Brahmayya, Vīra Bhāvayya, Vīra Nāgayya, Vīra Kallayya, Vīra Bhogayya, Vimaladevayya, Kakkayya, Kallayya, Kāṭakoṭayya, Cikkayya, Vīrayya, Śrī Sūrasāni, Koṇḍaguḍi Ketayya, Guṇḍayya, Caṇḍeśu Brahmayya, Śaṅkarayya, Amṛtadevayya, Aṇimiṣayya, Vimaladevuḍu, and many other devotees of Śiva.

They dwelt happily, enjoying the riches of devotion while they demonstrated the beautiful power of true devotion through visible evidence.

Whosoever saw, told, or heard of the power of devotion, the progress of devotion, and the majestic wealth of character of devotion belonging to the heroic māheśvaras gained lofty devotion to Śiva. The temple attendants, those who were initiated with a mantra, those who wore the edicts of Śiva as lord of the beasts and others voluntarily became liṅga wearers and learned to see. They voluntarily joined the liṅga wearers. Committed to the heroic māheśvara path, they enjoyed much prasāda.

The Boya Dispute

And then all the boyas got together and went to the king and said, "A calamity has befallen the city. There are Śrīkaṇṭha Śaivas, Gaurīnātha Śaivas, Lokeśa Śaivas, Trilocana Śaivas, Īśāna Śaivas, Māheśvara Śaivas, Pāśamocana Śaivas, Paramātma Śaivas, Śāśvata Śaivas, Gaṇeśvara Śaivas, Viśveśa Śaivas, Vimalātma Śaivas, Tripurāntaka Śaivas, Trinayana Śaivas, Dvipadaityahāri Śaivas, Deveśa Śaivas, Uruliṅga Śaivas, Ugrākṣa Śaivas, Hara Śaivas, Paramānanda Śaivas, Dharma Śaivas, Vidyādhara Śaivas, Nirmala Śaivas, Niṣkaḷa Śaivas, and all kinds of other Śaivas. But we do not understand all these sects!

"All of these imitate Basava's devotees and claim that they, too, wear the liṅga on their necks, and they eat all of the prasāda. They do not share even the slightest bit of it with us.

"Listen, O King, if even they do not give us any prasāda, how can we expect Mallajiyya and Bollajiyya[42] to give us anything in this town? It is a long-established tradition for us to get the prasāda. One of our boys[43] once went out to tend cattle and made a liṅga out of sand and milked the cows onto it. When the boy's father came along, he asked his son why he was wasting the milk by pouring it on the ground, and he kicked it with his foot. Without a thought for the fact that it was his own father, the boy chopped his legs to bits and found favor with Mṛḍa. Then the great God himself gave the boy prasāda. And Caṇḍeśa has passed it on to us. From that time on our caste has continuously enjoyed it. But now the people who call themselves heroic māheśvaras in this town want to break the tradition. On account of Basava's strategies, they have begun fighting with us. If you mean to have the tradition continuing, tell them. If you do not, O King, we are going to have fire pits dug at your doorway and burn ourselves."

In a rage, the king sent his men to get Basava. When Basava came in his compassionate way, the king said, "What is the meaning of sending away the boyas? And what do you mean by eating the prasāda yourself? Doesn't ancient tradition carry any weight at all with you? If it does not, explain your reasons for what you are doing. Is it right for you to just eat the prasāda without any explanation whatsoever?"

Then Basava spoke these words to the king: "Yes, there is a tradition of giving prasāda that began with Abhava giving it to Caṇḍeśa, as you know. But listen, there was never any tradition of giving prasāda that was associated with bāṇa[44] or crystal liṅgas, prāṇa liṅgas, and agates and other types of liṅgas. The āgamas say that. If ordinary people received, looked at, or passed over the prasāda of Maheśvara, they would fall into the fires of Hell. That is what is said. Haven't you heard?

"Are those with impure bodies capable of eating the prasāda of the blessed guru's compassionate affection, the prasāda prescribed by the āgamas, the pure, blissful, ever-graceful prasāda, the prasāda of the indescribable liṅga, the eminent, pure wealth of prasāda, the prasāda that is a medicine that cures the disease of birth and death, the prasāda of truth, the prasāda of eternity, the best prasāda of all, the prasāda that is given by the compassionate Poison Neck, or the rare prasāda of Saṅgameśvara?

"How is it possible for ordinary people to have the ability to enjoy prasāda that is the birth right of devotees of Malahara? Do asses wear howdahs like elephants? Nobody has ever seen such a thing. Have we ever refused to give prasāda where there was a tradition of doing so? Has anyone ever received it? Why do you talk so? Take it easy and do not get agitated."

"We get prasāda in Vāraṇāsi, Gaya, Kedāra,[45] Saurāṣṭra, Dākṣārāma, Śrīgiri, Setuvu, and in all the other āgamic places. How can you refuse to give it to us? We can give up our life breaths, but can we give up our right of taking the sacred food? What kind of twisted logic is this?" said the boyas with a commitment as they rose up.

With smiling eyes, Basava said, "Leaves fall in an ordinary breeze, but mountains do not fall no matter how hard the wind blows. Cork floats on water, but iron balls do not float. Don't insist. Even Hari, Brahma, and the rest cannot take things by force. How do you think you can do so? Quit being so adamant and be intelligent! Except in Śaiva temples, has there ever been a time or a place, either now or in the past, where you could get prasāda from the houses of the heroic māheśvaras? If you can cite any precedent, I will give you the prasāda.

"O twisted souls, you yourselves may be Śaivas, but if a person is a heroic māheśvara, he will never give you the prasāda of his prāṇa liṅga. Why are you so ambitious? If a person keeps asking for a little more in a measure, the measure will eventually fall over. But if you prefer, let's do it this way. This very day I will offer all kinds of deadly poisons to the great God: the blessed Maheśa, Moon Wearer, Death Killer, Black Neck, Serpent Earrings, Saṅgameśvara. You come, and if you really want it, I will give you the prasāda."

"What are you trying to say, Basava? It looks as if you have it in mind to kill us all with one blow. Not knowing how else to do it, you have hit on a plan to accomplish your purpose of feeding us poisonous prasāda. If we grit our teeth and somehow keep alive, we can get by with eating *balusu*[46] leaves. Who is going to eat something that will kill them? How can we argue with the likes of you? For us to eat it would be like mice going for a bite to eat and getting crushed in a trap. It would be like going out looting and losing your upper cloth.[47] This minister, Basava, is so tricky that he can kill his enemies with a smile.

"Why do you harbor malice against us? We are not that crazy. If there has ever been a tradition of offering poison to Śiva, do it! If anybody ever took poison as prasāda, we will do the same. It looks as if you want to have the best prasāda for yourself, and you want to give us deadly poison as our share! Why do you propose to give us Īśa's prasāda? Is it only because it is poison? Why don't you give poison to the god, and if you think that it will not kill you, eat it yourself! We promise you this: if you survive, take it, the prasāda is yours. Why speak so many words? This will be the agreement between us," said the boyas.

Then Bijjala got the consent of both parties and arrived at the temple of the God of gods. And the boyas came along with their crow banners flying.

Basava Drinks Poison

Basava took the devotees with him, gathered up all of the most deadly poisons—*kālakūṭam, sṛṅgi, vatsanābhi,* and *hālāhala*—and had them ground up.

"The fumes that are carried in the breeze are poisonous enough to kill all the animals. When it reaches the birds as they fly through the air, they fall dead on the earth. Even to do the grinding of this poison is enough to make one's intestines burst. How could anyone possibly drink it and live?" said the boyas. And they ran away.

First they mixed up the horrible poison and put it in golden bowls. Then, in the middle of the congregation of devotees of Three Eyes, they brought the bowls and offered them and lighted the lamps and incense. While the five kinds of instruments played, the renowned Emperor Basava fell prostrate in devotion before Maḍivālu Mācayya and the rest of the great liṅga devotees. With hymns of praise he opened the seal, and the fiery poison, which was like the fire of Rudra's terrible third eye, came boiling out with its red fumes.

The flames covered the sky. The sun was burned and ran away. The fourteen worlds fell this way and that. The entire earth was in an uproar. All the living beings fell down dead. Like roasting grain popping out of the pan, the stars fell on the earth. The lords of the cardinal points breathed the fumes and swooned. Smoke filled the entire cosmic egg. The mountains looked like heaps of soot. The oceans were disturbed by suboceanic fires. Brahma thought it was doomsday and shivered. Hari thought it was the same poison that had given him his blue color, and he grieved. Rudra himself was afraid that the poison had somehow escaped from his throat. The gaṇas thought that it was the fire of Rudra's third eye and began preparations for the final dissolution of the universe.

When the earth and the sky were filled with the fiery poison, Basava, the commander-in-chief, spoke: "O boyas, listen to the power of our Īśa devotees and keep silent. Don't give us any of your haranguing about what you have seen and not seen, what you have heard and not heard, what exists and what does not exist. The devotees of Parameśa are the purifiers of the entire universe. The peerless Pinākī is the only creator. We alone deserve the prasāda. Any traitor who says otherwise will be burned up in the fire of this poison. I will curse them. I will break their joints. And I will cast them into hell."

And Basava, the commander-in-chief, offered the poison in proud devotion to Saṅgameśa, the one who is praised by Caṇḍeśa, the one who wears the serpent as his mark.

When Basava began to eat, the whole multitude of māheśvaras shouted aloud and, without the slightest hesitation, bent their heads over their bowls.[48] They helped themselves to the poison with gold ewers, gold cups, gold bowls, and gold pitchers, and offered it joyfully to Kāma Killer.

"Don't spill any when you drink it, Sikkayyadeva!"

"Don't be noisy, Saṅgayyadeva!"

"Of course, I'll bring you some, Tripurārideva!"

"Come and have a seat, Vimalātmadeva!"

"Bring some more for Kālakaṇṭhayya; he does not have enough!"

"That is enough for you, Sirāḷadevayya!"

"Why are you in such a big hurray, Virupākṣadeva?"

"This ladleful is enough for Bhogayya."

"That is not enough! Shall I bring you some more, Śaṅkarācārya?"

"Have a little more, have a little more, Phālalocana!"

"I could drink any amount of it, Purātayya!"

"Śivadeva has not set his mind on it yet."

"I get whatever is left, Jagadevatandĕ!"

"You can't just send me away with a smile, Gaganeśvara!"

"Don't be hesitant, Śaṅkaradeva!"

"Shall I bring you some more, Lĕṅka Mañcayya?"

"Don't try to tell me that you have had enough, Parvatadeva!"

"Don't forget to serve Gurudeva!"

"Śiva, Śiva! Sinnadeva is not satisfied!"

"Pravimaladeva has kept his word!"

"Don't try to be cute, Mūrtidevayya, drink it!"

"Look at Dhūrjaṭideva, he is attacking."

"Don't be so hasty, Sarvajñadeva!"

"Do you think this is a game, Kĕmbāvi Bhogayya?"

"I know how much you can drink, Nijabhāvadeva!"

"I don't care, have some more, Mahāliṅgadeva!"

"Are you satisfied, Candraśekhara?"

"Why are you trying to hide, Nirmaladeva?"

"Don't try to escape, Kusumeśvara!"

"Don't be so aggressive, Kallidevayya!"

"Don't tell lies, Ṣŏḍḍaladeva!"

"Shall we give you some more, Dŏḍḍa Liṅgayya?"

"Don't clean your mustache yet, Miṇḍa Saṅgayya!"

"Don't make so many promises, Ballāṇadeva!"

"Kaḷyāṇadeva, fill your belly!"

"Shall I bring you another vessel of it, Gŏllavarāya?"

"Don't leave any, Śrīgirinātha!"

"Why are you so stubborn, Mudunūri Dāsi?"

"Drink it quickly, Karakaṇṭhadeva!"

"Why are you gorging yourself so, Vimalātmadeva?"

"Come on, Gŏggavva,[49] Mahādevi, Guḍḍaladevi, Duggaḷadevi, Sadyojātadevi, Ammavva, Sakaḷavva, Acaladevamma, Nimmavva, Śāntavva, Bammaladevi, Kāḷavva, Ketavva, Kāmaladevi, Ṣoḷaśi Bavamma, Somaladevi, Saṅgavva, Śivadevi, Sākaladevi, Liṅgavva, Rĕbbavva, Maṅgaḷadevi, Pramathavva, Bācavva, Padumaladevi, Vimalavva, Sellavva, Vīrabhadravva, Cikkala Rāmavva, Siddhaladevi, Akkavva, Soḍavva, Ānandadevi, Hŏllavva, Gallavva, Hŏnnaladevi, Hallavva, Mallavva, Animiṣadevi, Kētaladevi, and Purātavva. Sit down on this line."

They came together happily as friends and joked among themselves.

"We have never seen such a hubbub!"

"Only the great Basava knows such things!"

"Tammayya! My belly is so full. Don't give me any more.
"Just this much. I am not going to bring you any more."
"Loosen your girdle a little."
"I swear that my stomach is full and will not hold any more."
"Don't stretch or your stomach will sag."
"Would I give you more if your stomach sags?"
"This fellow has eaten until he is full up to his neck."
"This man was just fine. What is wrong with him now?"
"This is no big thing for him."
"Loosen your lower cloth so that it will not be too tight."
"I am not going to let you go if you loosen!"
"Stop fooling around with me."
"Look at that fellow eat."
"Why, have you eaten any less?"
"Poor thing! She doesn't have a mouth in her head!"[50]
"I am not leaving until your bowl is full!"
"Hurry up and bring me just a mouthful."
"Don't come when I shake my head, Father."
"Don't try to argue with me."
"Hey, this man is pregnant?"
"Why do you talk like that in the line?"
"Can you escape if you drink slowly? I will time your drinking."
"Come on, eat and don't fool around."
"Hurrah, look how fat my man has gotten!"
"Why are you bringing that? Don't bring it here!"
"Good, you are the one to sit at the head of a line."
"May I bring you a little something more?"
"No, sir, that is enough for me!"
"I won't leave you alone until you belch, Deva."
"Even if I belch, I will not have any room left."
"The plates are running over."
"If you serve too much, it will run over."
"Don't pour any more, or you will spill it!"
"If you spill it, it will go to Basava."
"Bring the cauldrons from behind the curtain."
"No, we will save them for you."

They brought the cauldrons and served them some more. They invited more devotees. They offered the poison affectionately to Śiva. They cried "Śiva, Śiva."

They were relaxed and easy about their eating. They slurped as they ate and drank. They belched loudly. They stretched their legs. They stretched and twisted their bodies and exercised their stomachs. They were utterly stupefied with pleasure. They staggered and wondered what had happened. They rested a while and closed their eyes. They gulped and swallowed. They ate up to their necks. They rejoiced. They draped themselves all over the place. They lost their wits. They floated on an ocean of bliss. They slumped over happily. They exposed their chests. They turned around and stared at their plates. They sipped a bit more. They got up and enjoyed themselves by dancing around. They held their bowls in their hands and sang songs. Some jumped and ran. They rejoiced and played. They spun around. They stood around on one leg. They made merry. They went forward and bowed down. They held out their hands and asked for a little more. They affectionately embraced one another. They ate as comrades with each person taking a plate from in front of someone else. They cried from sheer joy. Thus did the assembly of devotees of Three Eyes enjoy themselves as they played heroically with the poison.

In order to use up the remainder of Caṇḍeśa boon giver's prasāda, the great Basava, the commander-in-chief of the army, called the people who kept the granaries, the people who carried the whisks, the godown keepers, the banner carriers, the queen's brothers and their friends, relatives, neighbors, sons, and grandsons, the treasurers, the officers, the ministers, the chiefs of the army, the administrators, the servants, the confidants, the heralds, the maidservants, the courtesans, the musicians, the artful singers, the panegyrists, the scholars, the dancers, the jesters, and all the good poets, and had them sit in rows. Then, remarkably enough, he served them the poison. And to them it seemed as delicious as clarified butter and milk.

Then Basava called the mahouts and asked them to bring the elephants, calling them by name: Kālāgnirudra, Gaṇanāthu Dāya, Kolāhala, Kuñjarottamsa, Gaṅgādharapriya, Saṅgaravijaya, Liṅgasannāha, Maṅgalakīrti, Cavudantitilaka, Jagadekavīra, Bhavaduhkḥabañjana, Pañcāśyabala, Antakadarpasaṁhara, Durvipradantabhagna, Sadāśivamūrti, Bhadrebhasundara, Paravādivīravidrāvaṇa, Vīrabhadrāvatāra, Apramatta, Tripurāntaka, Jaṅgamaprasāda. And they brought all these along with the rest of the elephants.

Then he called the horsemen and said, "Bring Apratibala, Hayarāja, Suprasanna, and Subhaga. Bring Dharmakīrti, Tavarāju, Karmasaṁhara, and Nirmala. Bring Vāyuvega, Varada, Dāyarampamu, and Tattvajña. Bring Sṛṣṭipālaka, Citrāṅga, Duṣṭamardana, and Durdānta. Bring Candrātapa, Śāśvata, Indrāyudha, and Īśāna. Bring Ceramapriya, Sṛṅgāri, and Vārаṇāsi." And he had them bring all these along with the rest of the famous horses.

Basava fed poison to the horses and the elephants. But when they saw what he did, the boyas were very much afraid, and they trembled and shook. The assembly of Mṛḍa's devotees was very pleased and kept singing his praises. A rain of flowers fell from the sky as a result of the compassionate looks of the pramathas. The Rudra gaṇas looked down from the sky. And all the drums of heaven sounded at once.

Bijjala was amazed. When he bowed down, all the people gave uninterrupted cries of victory, saying, "You are the sickle that cuts the vine of mortal life! You are supremely pure! You are eulogized by the Śiva gaṇas! Your character is excellent! Your body is spotless! You eminently deserve prasāda! You are a well-known friend of good people! You are the eye of knowledge! You are the son of the great guru! You are an umbrella of good qualities! You are the sacred place of the jaṅgamas! You are a full measure of kindness! You are a raft over the ocean of grief! You are the triumphant defender! True devotion is like a wife to you.

"Basava, the words of śruti that say that 'enemies become friends, and poison becomes eatable'[51] are suited to you. Hurrah for our father who causes devotion to flourish! Hurrah for the lord of renowned valor! Hurrah for Basava, the form of Nandīśa! Hurrah for Basava, whose fame is imperishable!

"A long time ago, when Hara drank the poison that threatened the universe, he kept it in his throat because he was afraid to swallow it. What was so great about the power of that god? This poison is far worse than that was. Furthermore, you, the devoted commander-in-chief, did not hesitate and attempted no deceit, but drank it right up. Everyone knows that the assembly of gods is destroyed at the end of the age even though they have drunk ambrosia. But look at Basava! He has drunk poison but he still stands here in his divine body." And all the people were completely amazed.

The boyas were in a state of utter confusion. Their minds were sorely troubled. And they sang praises and fell prostrate on the ground, saying, "Grant us pardon, O Basava! You are an ocean of compassion! Grant us pardon, O Basava! Your character is beyond imagination! We are in no way your equal, Basava! We are no match for you. It is said to be better to have a good man as your enemy than a bad man as your friend. Therefore, please save us and protect us. Get rid of our confusion and grant us your blessings. Lord, you are our refuge and protection."

When the boyas begged him to do so in a thousand different ways, Basava looked at them with his compassionate gaze.

They fell out with him but he showed them mercy. He defeated their arguments and stood victorious. He destroyed their power and humbled their pride. He rejected their claims and got rid of them. He stood like a rock and praised God. He won by true devotion and flourished in valor. He regrouped the devotees and fulfilled the ancient utterances. He found the true path. He withstood logic. He filled the worlds with steadfast devotion. This was the pure fame of Basava.

The Story of Jagadeva, the Commander-in-Chief

Jagadeva, the commander-in-chief,[52] was a repository of true devotion and a karma yogi.[53] One day when he was enjoying himself in the lavish performance of an auspicious ritual, he came to Basava and said, "O best of the heroic māheśvaras, kindly accept these ashes.[54] O Minister Basava, if you come and eat at my house, I will live."

Basava looked at Jagadeva with a smile and said, "Can you bear all the śaraṇas who will also come?[55] Jagadeva said, "Let it be so." Then Jagadeva went home and had all kinds of fine foods prepared for him. But he decided to perform the anointing ceremony[56] before Basava arrived. And ignoring the standards of good devotion, he washed the feet of the brahmins. Basava learnt about this from a servant. He was furious and refused to go. At this point, Jagadeva came to see him.

Basava, who was in a rage, refused to see Jagadeva's face, put up a curtain before him, and spoke from behind the curtain. "How can you enter here? Get out of the assembly. When Malahara is your caste god and the god of your house, how can you take off on all different kinds of paths? How can a wicked man have pure and eternal devotion to Black Throat? Is it right to invite rogues to a feast where you are going to serve the lord of the three worlds? Is it right to wash brahmin feet with the same hands that bathe Hara? Is it right to put water that has washed bhavis' feet on your head, where you have already sprinkled the water from Śiva's feet? Is it right to worship those polluted dogs with the same hand that serve Mahādeva? How can you lift up the same hands to those polluted thread wearers that you raise to Kāma Killer? How can a person who lives in pure liṅga prasāda abandon devotion to Īśvara and eat with ritualistic untouchables?[57] Isn't it the same as eating their karma? The divine āgamas say that when a son, a daughter, a wife, a friend, or a clansman in the house of a Śaiva devotee does not wear the liṅga on his neck, it is as bad to associate with him as it is to fraternize with untouchables.

"According to the words 'Even seeing them is sinful,'[58] a devotee should not look at them, talk with them, touch them, sleep with them, associate with them in any way, give them food, or give them a place to sit.

"What more can I say of the path of devotion to the lord of living beings? He even converts beasts into devotees."

The Story of Eleśvaru Ketayya

"Listen to the story of Eleśvaru Ketayya, who was a devotee of the birthless god. His character was truly remarkable. He joyfully endowed his son, his friends, his wife, his clansmen, his slave, his servant, his cowherd, his cattle, his dog, his cat, and everyone else that lived in his house with a prāṇa liṅga.

"He never thought about bhavis. He did not look at them. He did not talk with them. He did not listen to them. He did not touch them. He did not enter into areas inhabited by them. He did not serve them food. And he did not eat what they served. He bought nothing from them, and he did not sell anything to them. Whatever potential for profit there was in them, he never went out to exploit it. He neither gave anything to them nor did he receive anything from them. He did not give them so much as a kernel of grain.

"He lived a life of complete renunciation of all bhavis. This was the example he set as the best path for devotees of Śiva to follow. Although he was well established in his devotion, the people continually threw up one obstacle after another in his path. But he never faltered.

" 'He calls us bhavis and himself a devotee, and he takes nothing, gives nothing, and asks nothing. For that reason, he always plants his own seed grain in the field at the appropriate time. But we are going to see about that,' they thought. And they went in a rage and set fire to the grain baskets where he stored his seed grain. Then the traitors watched to see what would happen.

"When Ketayya learned what they had done, he laughed to himself and thought, 'So what if the seed has burned?' And he brought seed baskets full of water and began sowing his fields with it as if it were seed grain. And that year he got a bumper crop on all his land.

" 'We used to hear stories of Hiḷḷahāḷa Brāhmaṇa, who raised crops in his field without sowing any seeds. But now we have seen such a thing for ourselves. Is there anything more amazing than the power of Kāma Killer's devotees?' said the people of the world in praise.

"But those sinners did not leave it at that. Without any consideration whatsoever for the cattle, themselves, or devotion, they noted where his cattle came to eat, and they set up a trap and caught them all without missing a one. Then they drove the cattle out of the fields.

"But as they were being driven away, because the lord of their life was not with them, the cattle passed ripe fields and lush meadows without eating so much as a blade of grass even by mistake. When they passed ponds filled with water, they did not even allow it to touch their noses. For seven days they went on like this, and it was an amazing sight to see.

"The thieves wondered, 'From the very first day that we caught these cattle, they have eaten nothing and drunk nothing. What is the point of keeping them? In another two or three days every one of them is going to die, anyway. Why should we subject ourselves to this bad karma? Let's allow them to go right now.' And with that they turned them loose.

"The cattle never paused, but turned back at once and bounded along with their tails in the air, never leaving the path on which they had come. It had taken them seven days to get to where they were, but they returned home in just seven watches.

"Back home, when Eleśu Ketayya saw the herd coming from afar, he was very angry and barred the gate of the corral, for he considered it a sin to talk to these vow-breaking cattle. When he refused to let them in, others in the village took pity on them and gave them grass and fodder. But the cattle did not even look at it.

"The cattle bellowed as if to say that they would not break their vows. They raised their heads and then bowed down with their tongues hanging out. They put their noses on the bars of the gate, and they went bawling and crying around the cattle shed. They looked longingly inside the yard at the great liṅga they used to worship. They wanted very much to go in, but they were afraid to do so because Ketayya had not invited them.

"When they saw the suffering cattle, the calves, which had remained tied inside, realized what was happening. But being afraid that their mothers might break their principles, they did not bawl.

"When Ketayya came to comfort the calves, he saw that the cattle had not eaten anything and realized that they had not lost their purity. And to the astonishment of everyone, he lowered the bars of the gate, and the cattle came pouring in, making sounds of pleasure and distress and looking around in all directions as they did so. They milled around and smelled every thing and touched the liṅga with their noses as if to say that it was a witness that they had not touched even a blade of grass since they had left it. They performed touch worship of the liṅga. They quickly bowed at Ketayya's feet.

"Then they went at once and ate their fill of fodder and grass. They followed that up by drinking some water. Then they licked themselves, lay down, got up, and let down the milk into their teats. The mother cows mooed affectionately. Knowing that Ketayya was holding the cows, the calves bawled without ceasing. And when he released them, they went to their mothers and gave suck.

"Because they belonged to Eleśu Ketayya's house, the cattle were steadfast devotees of Śiva. How could they ever join anyone else? When you think about it, this is a guru's path."

The Story of Savarada Nācayya

"One day Savarada Nācayya's wife gave birth to twins, and she gave the first-born boy a liṅga while he was still being delivered. Because they had made no arrangements for a liṅga for the second child, the woman waited until he was delivered and then told her husband.

" 'He has strayed from the path! Throw him out! I do not even want to see him! The śaraṇas say that the association of an individual with a guru liṅga must be accomplished at the time when a child is half-born,'[59] said Nācidevayya. And he publicly disowned the child. This is of course an old story, but when there are such paths for examples, is it right for you to associate with these thread-wearing untouchables? These cowards cowardly served living beings even though the lord of living beings was here. You must grab them and cut off their noses, leaving only the stumps! Then you must rub what is left on a brick. Will Moon Wearer dwell with these ritualists? No, he lives only with the devotees.

"Is the power that comes from the path of pure devotion to Śiva something that an evil person like you can know? How can a blind man know what a lamp looks like? What does a deaf man know of music? How can a feverish man judge the taste of milk? Do frogs know the depth of the ocean? Does a monkey know the value of a gem? What does a dog know about heaven? Can a fly gather honey from flowers? Can owls ever learn anything about the sun? Tell me, then, how ignorant people can possess the knowledge of true devotion?

"Having one-pointed devotion to the liṅga is like having a great heap of money in your front yards. It is like nectar from the *taṅgeḍu* flower.[60] It is like ambrosia oozing from your palate. How can you ignore such a path and follow evil paths? To do so is like collecting bits of broken glass when there is an abundance of precious stones. It is like eating bran when you have a heap of grain before you. It is like taking a pot and going out to milk a dry cow when you already have the all-giving cow showering milk in your cow yard. It is like asking for a dull knife when you already have Indra's powerful weapon with you. It is like seeking fruit from a fruitless tree when you already have the all-giving tree next to your house. It is like floating in a flood with the help of a gourd when you have a ship nearby. This is the way it is to lose one's self in karma when the auspicious path of devotion is available.

"How can ignorant people become sensible?[61] No matter how often you wash a black blanket, it will never become white. No matter how many times you put splints on a dog's tail, it will never become straight. Soak a stone in water as long as you like, but it will never become soft. Keep feeding milk to a snake, but it will never lose its venom. Grind *neem* leaves with honey, but they will never lose their bitterness. Scrub soil, but it will never become clean.

"It is like plowing and plowing with a golden plow and then planting nightshade. It is like cutting up a camphor tree to build a fence around a plot of full-grown cactuses. It is like pouring urine in a sacrificial fire as an oblation. It is like bringing ritual water to wash the feet of a dog. It is like pouring water into a broken pot. It is like a tree that no longer gives shade.

"It is useless to worship those who are not on the Śaiva path. Because he performed a sacrifice that was not directed to Śiva, Dakṣa lost his head. Paraśurāma gave all the land to the brahmins, but what did he get for it?[62] The whole world knows how Bali was tied up for worshiping brahmins. Didn't Gautama commit the sin of killing a cow because of brahmins? To feed ten million brahmins who have mastered the Vedas would not profit you as much as giving alms to one devotee of Three Eyes. When you know all this and still listen to crooked arguments, your devotion is lost and your gifts bring you no profit at all."

When Basava repeatedly admonished him, Jagadeva's eyes filled with tears, and he bowed down before the assembly of devotees with folded hands and said, "I am tied down by karma. I am an abominable sinner. I am overly proud. I am a shrine of bad deeds. I am stupid. I am a great evildoer. I am unwise. I have made many mistakes. I have thoughtlessly followed bad traditions. There is no way to expiate my sins. Why should I go on living? I am going to give up my life. Give me your permission, so that I can do so!"

When Jagadeva stood bowed before them, Basava looked at him and with the assent of the assembly of devotees, he spoke these words: "Listen carefully! In a few days, treason against Śiva is going to be perpetrated here. Whoever the traitor might be, you must kill him. When you have done so, you will gain our approval, and Śiva will grant you his favor. All the Śaiva gaṇas will praise you for your decisiveness, and they will grant you their compassion. Believe what I am telling you, and get up."

Then Jagadeva was elated and touched his folded hands to his forehead and accepted the heroic betel.[63] When he had done so, Basava went with the assembly of devotees to the house of Jagadeva, the śaraṇa. After performing all the appropriate acts, Basavanna and the peerless devotees were submerged in the ocean of the ambrosia of devotion.

The Story of Allayya and Madhupayya

Two Black Throat devotees named Allayya and Madhupayya lived in Kaḷyāṇa. They were heaps of nonkarma; they were absorbed in the liṅga; they were always ready to worship jaṅgamas; they were always attentive to the supreme path of Śiva; and their fame was great.

After some time, Bijjala wanted to go to the god of death, and so, even though he knew of Basava's efficacy, his devotion, and his power, he acted as if he did not know them.

Paying heed to evil counsel, he judged Allayya and Madhupayya[64] without their having done anything at all wrong and without any consideration for the inappropriateness of his action. He simply summoned them and had their eyes removed.

"He knows the power of the gaṇas of Śiva's devotees, doesn't he? Alas, this king is bent upon destroying himself. How is this city going to survive? If Mṛḍa's devotees become angry, won't he perish?" said the people as they talked among themselves.

Basava and the rest of the devotees of Three Eyes were enraged. And they rose up and without delaying for a minute restored Allayya's and Madhupayya's eyes.

"We cannot stay in this town," said the Śaṅkara devotees. And they demanded that Jagadeva, the minister, keep the promise that he had made to destroy the traitor against Śiva.

They wiped out the lines from Bijjala's forehead.[65] They eliminated the kingdom from the file of Three Eyes. They destroyed the king's capital city. They publicly cursed the city, saying, "The city will be destroyed! It will be destroyed! It will be destroyed!"

Then Maḍivālu Mācayya, Cauḍarāya, Ekānta Rāmayya, Kinnara Brahmayya, Keśirājayya, Kannada Brahmayya, Kakkayya, Mādirājayya, Masaṇayya, and all the rest of the devotees of that city and the host of jaṅgamas went along with Basava, the treasurer and commander of the army, as he rapidly made his way to Kappaḍisaṅgameśvara. And Bijjala was downcast.

Alas! As soon as Black Throat's gaṇas were gone, the good fortune of the city was lost. The earth quaked in the middle of the night. Crows cawed. Cooked food rotted. Meteors fell. Stones rained down. Halos formed around the sun and the moon and filled the whole sky. There was an unbearable heat wave followed by heavy dew. The god of death was seen in his fierce form at midday in the city. Everything was black. The king saw a headless shadow. Where the sun should have risen, there were countersuns. The people were distressed and afraid of what might happen.

When Jagadeva went home, his mother looked at him and said,[66] "As soon as you hear of anyone committing treason against the Śiva gaṇas, you must kill him without a second thought. If you cannot kill him, you must kill yourself. This is the only path for a devotee of the killer of the god of death. Will Three Eyes have any appreciation for a crooked, mean, ignorant, useless, contrary man who is unable to act like a warrior and kill others, or, failing that, who is unable to kill himself? Will he be devoted to him? Will he provide him with anything?

"But why do I even have to talk like this? A while back these devotees appreciated your willingness to kill yourself, and they gave you an opportunity to prove yourself by doing something for them. Tell me this: was it because they were unable to do it themselves that the devotees asked you to kill that traitor? If even one of them gets angry, all the cosmic eggs will be swept away. When Dakṣa became overly proud at his sacrifice and abused Śiva, Gauri was unable to listen to him, and she burned herself in the fire of her own anger.[67] Haven't you heard that story? Not only that, Upamanyu burned himself to ashes rather than listen to Bhava being criticized. So what right do you have to keep silent while the Śaiva devotees are criticized? How can you come home to eat without killing him first? Do you expect a free meal? Bah! You dog! Aren't you embarrassed to eat Śiva's prasāda with your own hands? Even a dog will come to eat if you call him by clicking your tongue." And she clicked her tongue, snapped her fingers, and took

Mṛḍa prasāda in a small bowl and poured it on the ground in the corner of the courtyard.

"She is right," thought Jagadeva. And like a dog he ate it.

When they heard the news, two heroic devotees named Mallayya and Brahmayya went quickly to Jagadeva and ate prasāda along with him. Later that same night, they went to the court. When they spotted Bijjala at a distance, they drew their swords. Angrily, while the whole court stood in fear, the three of them sprang on him all at once. They overcame him and stabbed him and killed him.[68] And in a rage, they cut off his head and put it in his belly.

"We have killed this despicable man at the command of the innumerable devotees. Whoever causes harm to the devotees will meet the same fate," they said. They drew up their bodies, jumped up and down, roared, shouted, cried aloud, and screamed, saying that there was no one mightier than the liṅga devotees.

En masse, the people shouted, "Bijjala is beheaded!"

Then Jagadeva left the palace and went to his own house along with Mallayya and Brahmayya, and fell prostrate on the ground before his mother. And they took the prasāda that she gave them.

But Jagadeva thought, "I am not free by just killing that heinous sinner, that enemy of devotees. I still have to be punished for my sin of having tarried before killing that traitor." So he decapitated himself, and at once he was taken on a flying chariot to the world of Śiva along with his sons, friends, his wife, his clansmen, and all the rest.

The people of the city panicked and began to stampede. The devotees who saw what happened, or heard about it afterward, and all the others spread out in every direction.

Bijjala's sons fought with each other for the kingdom, and all of them died. The horses caught fire in the burning stables and ran out with tails aflame. The elephants threw themselves against each other and died. The ministers also fought among themselves and died. Because of Basava's truthful curse, the whole city was destroyed.

When he heard what was happening, Basava went to Kūḍali to see his guru Saṅgayyadeva, and remained there happily with the devotees. He worshiped his guru in all the appropriate ways, and having served him, praised him, sang hymns to him, and pleased him in many ways. He said, "God! True Guru! Divine liṅga! God! Saṅgayyadeva! Lord of my life! I have eaten the prasāda of your true devotees and prospered. Therefore, I should be their servant for many lifetimes. And I should be indebted to them.

"But was there ever a time when I asked you for anything or when you gave me anything or when you forgave me my faults? If there are any such situations, point them out to me. From my birth, I did not accept so much as a betel nut from you but worshiped you completely, free from all desires. True, it is good if one performs free service for you for even a thousand years. But is it right for you to keep me here? I swear on you and the pramathas, O Bull Rider, listen to what I am trying to tell you. How can you leave this bull? I will accept nothing less. Lord, I am not going to ask you for any more boons.

"You are supreme bliss! You are the ecstatic being! Let my mind, words, body, actions, and consciousness rest in you. For I have done everything that you have commanded me to do."

At once the great guru had compassion, assumed his original form, and emerged from the inner part of the temple.

When Basava saw his guru, he fell prostrate with his head on the guru's feet. He was so happy that his voice quaked; he cried tears of bliss, and his body thrilled.

The guru made his son get up, gave him prasāda, and embraced him. Then he took his son into himself, and together they entered the temple and were no longer seen. While all the devotees watched, Basava entered his guru's womb. Coming in the form of a true guru, Saṅgayyadeva had taken Basava into himself.

The host of jaṅgamas were amazed and overjoyed, and they roared their approval.

While flowers rained down upon the earth, the assembly of devotees screamed and praised him again and again with joyous shouts. And while victory cries rang out, the devotees danced.

Mādirājayya, Mācideva, and all the rest of the devotees joyfully watched and wondered whether Basava was subject to the worlds of birth, existence, and death. He was like the whirlwind that is born out of the wind and reabsorbed into it. He was like a wave that rises from the ocean and returns to the ocean. He was like the lightning that is born out of the sky and returns to the sky. He was like the hailstone that is born of water and returns to water. He was born of his guru's compassion, and he flourished through that compassion. And now he has returned to rest in his guru's womb. Isn't that what happens to those who are devoted to the feet of the guru? Basava and his guru are like the flower and its fragrance. Is there any way to separate them? He came to the earth for the benefit of Malahara's devotees. His identity was only an aspect of Īśvara.

Thus they praised him and remained there for a time floating in the middle of the ocean of blissful nectar that is born of true devotion.

I have devotedly, and to the best of my ability, told the praiseworthy story of Basava just as I heard it from the devotees. But who am I to narrate the marvelous story of the great Basava, whose story even the lord of this world is not capable of knowing? My only strength is that I do not know any other gods.

I conceived this as a form of praise to the glorious devotees. It is for the purification of my own speech that I have composed this supreme story.

Anyone who listens respectfully to the *Basava Purāṇa* will gain grace and bliss. Anyone who listens respectfully to the *Basava Purāṇa* will gain the inclination toward great devotion. Anyone who listens respectfully to the *Basava Purāṇa* will be shown compassion by the great devotees. Anyone who listens respectfully to the *Basava Purāṇa* will have the permanent comfort that comes from the experience of the liṅga. Anyone who listens to the *Basava Purāṇa* will get everything that he desires. Anyone who has the *Basava Purāṇa* copied and anyone who reads it regularly will have sins, calamities, and dangers removed by the grace of Hara. Anyone who keeps a copy of this purāṇa in his house will be happy in this world and in the next.

Because of the meaning of the *Basava Purāṇa* for the śaraṇas, your fame has spread throughout the three worlds. Because of the meaning of the *Basava Purāṇa* for the śaraṇas, you have gained physical and spiritual enjoyment. Because of the meaning of the *Basava Purāṇa* for the śaraṇas, your words have become truthful and pleasant. You are the excellent disciple of Mādanna of Gŏbbūru. You are Saṅga of Gŏbbūru. Your character is great.

This is the work of the good poet and fortunate soul Pālkuriki Somanātha, who enjoys the fragrance of the lotus feet of the innumerable māheśvaras and who is immersed in the ambrosial ocean of pleasure that is derived from the blessings of the jaṅgama liṅga. It has benefited greatly from the poetic spirit graciously bestowed by Karasthali Viśvanātha.

This is the seventh chapter of the story that is known as the *Basava Purāṇa*.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Piḍuparti Somanātha, PBP, Preface, verses 28–46.
2. Prabhakara Sastri, ed. BP, Introduction, pp. 22–23. These legends about Somanātha are also related in other books; see, for example, Ekāmranāthuḍu, *Pratāparudracaritramu*, a late fifteenth-century text.
3. PBP, Preface, p. 25.
4. PC, vol. 1, p. 22.
5. Ibid., p. 15.
6. Ramanujan, trans., *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 88.
7. Ibid., p. 21.
8. Prabhakara Sastri, BP, Introduction, p. 74.
9. Ibid., p. 31.
10. The dates given here are from Desai, *Basaveśvara and His Times*, pp. 168–288. Other scholars, however, suggest different dates. According to Bandaru Tammayya, Basaveśvara lived in 1120–1168. A recent book by Badala Ramayya, *Basaveśvaravacanālu: Samagrasamīkṣa*, argues that Basaveśvara was born in 1140 and died in 1196.
11. The main sources for information on the debates of Telugu scholars about Somanātha's dates are the following: Veturi Prabhakara Sastri, BP, Introduction, pp. 1–129 (this essay formed the basis for most of the later discussions on the BP); C. Narayana Rao, PC, Introduction, vol. 1, pp. 1–348; Kandukuri Viresalingam, *Kavijīvitamulu*; R. Narasimhacaryulu, *Karṇāṭaka Kavi Carite*; Komarraju Lakshmana Rao, Introduction to *Mallikārjuna Paṇḍitārādhya's Śivatattvasāramu*; S. Krishnaswami Ayyangar, *Some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture*; Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma, "Pālkuriki Somanāthuni Kālamu," *Bharati*, February 1945, pp. 102–108; Nelaturi Venkata Ramanayya, *Pālakuriki Somanāthu ḍeppaṭivāḍu;* Bandaru Tammayya, *Pālkuriki Somanāthuni Jīvitamu* and "Somanāthu ḍeppaṭivāḍu?" *Pariśodhana*, August–November 1955, pp. 9–36; Caganti Seshayya, *Āndhrakavitaraṇgiṇi*, vol. 3, pp. 84–147; Nidadavolu Venkata Rao, BP, Introduction.
12. The original reads *paṇḍitārādhyakṛpāsamudgatuḍu* (Venkata Rao, BP, p. 2).
13. The verse from *Udbhaṭakāvya* is the following:

> jananāthottama somarājanu sirdīkāvyam valam sālivā
> hanaśākābdamadĕydĕ *sāsiradanūrimsamdanālvattunā*

> *lkanĕ* yāramjita citrabhānuva varāśvījotsitaikādaśī
> vanajātāritanūjavāsaradŏḷādattalla maṅgarpitam

The words in italics indicate the date is Śaka era 1144, equivalent to A.D. 1222.

14. The variant reading of the passage quoted in the previous note is *sāsiradanānursamdanālvattunālkane*. For debates on the two readings, see Badala Ramayya, *Basaveśvaravacanālu*.
15. The inscription is generally known as the Nīlagaṅgavara Stone Inscription of Ambayadeva, A.D. 1290.
16. PC, Introduction, vol. 1, pp. 8–22.
17. Ibid., p. 7.
18. BP, pp. 2–5; PC, vol. 1, pp. 8–12.
19. PBP, Preface, verse 42. Also see Prabhakara Sastri, BP, Introduction, p. 8, where he corrects a misprint in verse 42. Bandaru Tammayya says that the name of the village is Kalyamu, Bangalore District, Karnataka. Bandaru Tammayya, BP, Preface, p. 117.
20. In *Anubhavasāramu*, Somanātha says that he belongs to *bhṛṅgiriṭi gotra*, which may be one of the lineages adapted by Śaiva jaṅgamas. For an interesting discussion about this, see C. Narayana Rao, PC, vol. 1, Introduction, pp. 13–15.
21. Prabhakara Sastri, BP, Introduction, p. 9. Nearly every scholar except Tammayya has agreed with Prabhakara Sastri.
22. PC, vol. 1, p. 15.
23. Prabhakara Sastri points out that in PC, Vemanārādhya is described as a *bhūsura*, "god on the earth," an epithet used for brahmins. See PC, vol. 1, p. 432; Prabhakara Sastri, BP, Introduction, p. 10.
24. For a complete discussion of this issue and Tammayya's arguments, see Tamayya, *Pālkuriki Somanāthuni Jīvitamu*.
25. Prabhakara Sastri, BP, Introduction, p. 13.
26. See p. 232.
27. Prabhakara Sastri, BP, Introduction, p. 12.
28. PC, vol. 1, p. 85.
29. Ibid., pp. 21–22.
30. Bibliographic information may be found in the bibliography.
31. Somanātha's use of *maṇipravāḷa* (gem and coral) style (so called because the Sanskrit and Telugu words keep their distinction, as in a mixture of gems and coral) represents a colloquial use of his time. Standard grammar of the mārga poets requires that the Sanskrit words be converted into *tatsamas*, that is, that suitable Telugu suffixes be added to them. Tikkanna, the author of the Telugu *Mahābhārata*, in contrast, vowed not to mix Sanskrit forms and Telugu forms in his poetry, from which we may infer that he was resisting the maṇipravāḷa style, which was being used by some poets during his time. Using foreign words is still very common in colloquial Telugu, whereas in formal speech a proper Telugu equivalent is preferred. In So-

manātha's time, apparently, Sanskrit words were used in informal speech without grammatical alterations—as in maṇipravāḷa style—whereas formal speech required that they be suitably "translated" into Telugu.

32. 1. *Akṣarāṅkagadya*, a text in praise of Basava. The words of each line are in alphabetical order, beginning with "a" and ending with the last letter of the alphabet, "kṣa." 2. *Aṣṭottaraśatanāmagadya*; a text in 108 lines praising Basava in his 108 names, whence the name *aṣṭottaraśata*. 3. *Basavaśatakamu*, a text of eight poems in praise of Basava. 4. *Basavodāharaṇa*, an appeal to the deity in a genre called *udāharaṇa*, popularized by Somanātha. The genre is based on the use of all eight grammatical cases of the language, with each verse composed in one case, beginning with the nominative and ending with the vocative. 5. *Cennamallusīsamulu*, thirty-two verses describing the eight phases (*āvaraṇas*) of Vīraśaivism. It is believed that Somanātha composed these verses toward the end of his life. 6. *Namaskāragadya*, composed in Sanskrit with each line ending in the instrumental case. 7. *Pañcaprakāragadya*, a hymn composed in five different meters. 8. *Pañcaratnamulu*, five verses in praise of Basava. 9. *Śaraṇubasavagadya*, which ends with a refrain, "Śaraṇu Basava." It begins and ends with Kannada verses, though the text is in Telugu. Most of Somanātha's minor works are published by Bandaru Tammayya in *Somanāthuni Laghukṛtulu*.

CHAPTER I

1. *He*: refers to the author's guru, who is understood to be Śiva. All the epithets apply equally to Śiva and the guru.
2. *sun . . . great yogis*: lotuses open when the sun shines on them.
3. *devotee*: *bhakta* literally means "devotee." In BP, however, the term is used specifically to designate initiates into the Vīraśaiva tradition.
4. *three worlds*: the upper world or the world of the gods, the middle or human world, and the underworld or the world of serpents and demons. Or, this could also mean the world of matter, *dravyamaya*; of energy, *śaktimaya*; of consciousness, *prajñāmaya*.
5. *Vedānta*: literally, "end of the Veda," or the complete knowledge of the Veda. This refers to the philosophy of the *upaniṣads* in a general sense.
6. *Cĕnna*: this word, meaning "fair, bright, beautiful," is frequently added to the names of deities associated with both Viṣṇu (e.g., Cĕnnakeśava) and Śiva (e.g., Cĕnna Mallikārjuna). It is also found as a name (Cĕnnayya) among men, often of nonbrahmin castes.
7. *Mallikārjuna*: the form of Śiva that resides in the great Śiva temple at Śrīśailam.
8. *pramatha*: an attendant on Śiva, usually in Kailāsa. In certain stories in BP, a superior human devotee becomes a pramatha.
9. *ancient devotees* (*purātana bhaktas*): generally speaking, these are the same

sixty-three Śaiva saints (Nāyaṉmār) who appear in the Tamil PP, although not all of the sixty-three are mentioned in BP.

10. *liṅga*: the concrete form of the absolute, or Śiva; phallus-shaped form worshiped in temples and worn by Vīraśaivites on their body.
11. *Basava*: the central figure in the *Basava Purāṇa*, he is depicted as an incarnation of Nandi, Śiva's bull. Although BP and other Vīraśaiva works give him a very prominent position in the court of Kālacuri Bijjala of Kaḷyāṇa, direct contemporary inscriptional evidence is lacking. For a study of his life and times, see P. B. Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*.
12. *Śrīśailam*: the name of a sacred hill on the banks of the Krishna River in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh. It is also known as Śrīgiri and Śrīparvatam. For the sake of simplicity, we have used the name Śrīśailam throughout; the three names are identical in meaning. Śrīśailam is said to be one of the five great Vīraśaiva *maṭhas* (monasteries) of India, allegedly established by the *pañcācāryas* (five teachers), the others being Kollipaka, Ujjini, Kedara, and Varanasi. It is also one of the twelve *jyotirliṅgas*. C. Narayana Rao, PC, vol. 1, Preface, p. 346.
13. *great God*: Śiva.
14. *Pārvati*: Śiva's wife, literally, "the daughter of the mountain." For the sake of simplicity, we have rendered a number of names with the same essential meaning, such as Haimavati, literally, "the daughter of Himalaya Mountain," by the name Pārvati.
15. *Hara*: a name of Śiva meaning "the destroyer" and referring to his capacity to destroy rebirth, sin, *karma*, and so on.
16. *Mount Kumāra*: a hill about a mile west of the village of Tripurāntakam (see next note), it has the temple of Tripurāntakeśvara at its summit.
17. *Tripurāntakam*: a village in Markapuram Taluk, Kurnool District. It lies approximately thirty-five miles east of Śrīśailam. It was an important place of Śakti worship in Andhra and also an important Siddha center. It is locally believed to be the place where Śiva destroyed the Tripuras.
18. *Tripuras*: the three demon cities that were destroyed by Śiva. See *Mahābhārata* 8.33–34; ŚP 2.5.10 (AITM, vol. 1, pp. 846–850).
19. *Karasthali Somanāthayya*: unknown in other sources.
20. *mobile liṅga (cara liṅga)*: the liṅga worn on the person of a devotee as distinct from the liṅga that is permanently fixed in a temple or other stationary place. The wearing of such a liṅga is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Vīraśaivas.
21. *Black Throat* (*Kālakandhara*): Śiva is very frequently referred to or addressed by epithets. We have translated some of these as names and some as descriptive phrases. Others are simply transliterated. The epithet Kālakandhara derives from the story that Śiva swallowed the poison *hālāhala*, which emerged when the gods churned the ocean of milk for *amṛta*, "ambrosia." His throat became black when he held it there. See O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, p. 277.

22. *jaṅgama*: literally, "one who is mobile." Vīraśaivism distinguishes between lay devotees, the ordinary bhaktas, and jaṅgamas. Every jaṅgama is to be regarded as equal or even superior to the liṅga or Śiva.
23. *śaraṇa*: an advanced stage of spiritual progress toward unity with the liṅga.
24. *Paṇḍitārādhya*: a Vīraśaiva saint from the Telugu country. The PC, also by Somanātha, is the story of his life and works.
25. *assembly of devotees* (*goṣṭhi*): "The expression, *anubhava* or *anubhāva*, gained currency in Vīraśaiva literature in the technical sense of spiritual or mystical experience. The councils of conferences wherein the devotees met to consider questions relating to such an experience or pursuit were called *goshti*." Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, pp. 270–271.
26. *Reṇṭāla Mallinātha*: not known from other sources. There is a village in the Palnadu Taluk of Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, called Reṇṭāla; this may suggest that he is a Telugu man from that area.
27. *Vedānta . . . āgamas*: the emphasis here is not upon specific classes of sacred texts but upon the fact that the path being followed is in agreement with all these texts.
28. *not to cross the boundary of his native land* (*grāmasīmālaṅghanavratālaṅkṛtini bĕrci*): Vīraśaiva devotees took vows called *śīlavratas*. One of these is a vow not to cross the boundary of one's native village. Other vows include never to chew betel, never to look into a mirror, and never to wear sandals.
29. *steps*: they are often constructed to facilitate access to temples built on the tops of hills. Doing so is an act of religious merit.
30. *Docamāmba*: unknown in other sources, she seems to be a contemporary of Somanātha.
31. *oleander*: *karavīra*.
32. *guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama*: the three most sacred things for Vīraśaivites.
33. *māheśvaras*: the devotees. Note that in this section the author is taking the assembly of Śaivite devotees as his authority. Most of the non-Vīraśaiva Telugu authors take pains to acknowledge a Sanskrit textual authority even if the connection is tenuous.
34. *Gŏbbūru*: a village in Markapuram Taluk, Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh.
35. *Karṇāṭa*: included present-day Karnataka and what is now known as Rayalasima in Andhra Pradesh.
36. *śāmbhava dīkṣa*: the initiation during which an individual is endowed with the *iṣṭa liṅga*, which he wears on his person at all times.
37. *sacred syllable*: *praṇava*, the syllable *om*.
38. *Maṇḍĕga Mādirāju*: this individual has the same name as Basava's father, but there is no indication that they are identical. In fact, Basava's father is last mentioned in the text when Basava leaves home after refusing to have the thread ceremony performed. See later in this chapter.
39. *water . . . feet*: the eight aids to the realization of oneness with Śiva are guru, liṅga, jaṅgama, *pādodaka*, *prasāda*, *vibhūti*, *rudrākṣa*, and mantra. *Pādodaka*,

the fourth of these, is the water that washes the feet of the guru and is then drunk by the disciple. It is believed to dispel ignorance, eradicate impurities, put an end to rebirth, and grant supreme knowledge. Malledevaru, *Essentials of Vīraśaivism*, pp. 69–71.

40. *Saṅganāmātya*: the individual to whom BP is dedicated. His name appears at the beginning of each chapter. Saṅgana is a name, and *amātya* is a title, "king's minister," but here it probably indicates that Saṅgana belongs to a brahmin subsect (niyogis), and did administrative jobs rather than ritual-specialist jobs.
41. *sacred purāṇas*: mythological and didactic works regarded as sacred by all Hindus, though some sects consider some purāṇas more acceptable than others. The two principal Śaiva purāṇas in Sanskrit are *Liṅga Purāṇa* and *Śiva Purāṇa*. The epics, which are somewhat less closely tied with particular sects, are also often termed purāṇas.
42. *Uma*: Pārvati.
43. *Rudra, Īśvara*: Śiva.
44. *womb-hand of the liṅga guru*: the reference here is to the initiation or *dīkṣa*, which is usually performed in the eighth year of the individual. "After the initiation ceremony, the initiated is transformed, and his previous caste or *varṇa* should be ignored and he must be regarded as initiated in all respects. In fact, he takes a new birth at the 'lotus-hands' of the spiritual preceptor." Malledevaru, *Essentials of Vīraśaivism*, pp. 63–66.
45. *gaṇa*: an assemblage of attendants on Śiva; also a single attendant. Identified with pramatha.
46. *devotee gotra* (*bhakti gotra*): a gotra is a clan or lineage traced to a vedic *ṛṣi* or sage. Since every brahmin belongs to a gotra of one ṛṣi or another, to claim to be of the "devotee gotra" is to reject all previous familial attachments in favor of being known as a devotee of Śiva.
47. *Viṣṇurāmideva . . . Śriyādevi*: the wording here is deliberately vague, leaving room for the interpretation that the parents are adoptive rather than natural. This is in conformity with the Śaiva belief that every devotee is reborn from the hand of the guru.
48. *Karasthali Viśvanātha*: Somanātha's literary mentor; neither he nor his poetry is known from other sources, but Somanātha acknowledges him at the end of each chapter.
49. *bosom friend*: only Nannayya, the great poet who rendered the first part of the *Mahābhārata* into Telugu, and Somanātha include a "friend" in their acknowledgments.
50. *bhavi*: according to general use in Vīraśaiva literature, a bhavi is anyone who is not a Vīraśaiva. This includes followers of other Hindu sects as well as Buddhists and Jains.
51. *since . . . dvipada meter*: See the Introduction, pp. 5–6.
52. *If a tūmu . . . sola*: A *tūmu* is a large measuring vessel; a *sola* is a small one.
53. *Is it not . . . simple words*: the original has *alpākṣaramula nanalpārtha racana*, which literally means "composing great meaning in fewer syllables." The

aphorism is popular in the Sanskrit literary tradition to argue in favor of brevity. Sanskrit grammarians use the concept of *alpākṣara*, economy of syllables, to define a good grammatical rule, that is, it should be as brief as possible. Somanātha, who is never brief in his words, turns around the concept of *alpa* to mean simple, utilizing the popular understanding of the word: "little" or "less complex."

54. *the collection of songs*: which songs are being referred to here is obscure.
55. *esoteric theory of the liṅga*: the Vīraśaiva tradition that is available only to initiates.
56. *stories of the ancient devotees*: a number of the individual stories that are found in BP are also found, often in different versions, in other Śaiva works, most notably the Tamil PP.
57. *Three Eyes*: Śiva. We have used this name in place of a number of epithets that refer to Śiva's three eyes. In this case, the original reads *asamākṣa*, literally, "one who has odd-numbered eyes."
58. *can anyone else become Basava*: *aikyam*, or union with Śiva, is the ultimate goal of the devotee, but nothing of that sort is possible with Basava, and thus he is seen to be in some ways greater than Lord Śiva himself.
59. *Liṅgadeva*: Śiva.
60. *Black Throat*: Śiva.
61. *mirror in the devotees' hands*: an idiom indicating accessibility.
62. *ten million*: *koṭi* (ten million) is a significant number in estimating riches. When a person had a *koṭi* of whatever coin was in vogue at the time, he hoisted a flag on his house announcing his status. Based on this belief, *koṭlādhipati*, "one who has *koṭis* of money," is referred to as *koṭiki paḍagĕttinavāḍu*, "one who has hoisted a flag to a *koṭi* of money."
63. *nine sentiments*: the nine *rasas* of Sanskrit aesthetic tradition. For details, see Edwin Gerow, *Indian Poetics*, pp. 245ff.
64. *Mṛḍa*: Śiva.
65. *bad poets*: there is a tradition of ritually condemning "the bad poets" in the prefaces to literary works. Somanātha observes the tradition, along with Tikkanna, whom many critics consider to have been the earliest Telugu poet to observe this practice.
66. *Kāma Killer*: Mārāri, an epithet of Śiva that comes from the story of how Śiva burned up the god of love when he interrupted his austerities. We have translated a number of epithets with the same essential meaning with these words. For the story see ŚP 2.3.17–19 (AITM, vol. 2, pp. 537–548); O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, pp. 154–157.
67. *moonbeam eye* (*vĕnnĕla gala kaṇṭan*): with his gentle glance as distinct from his ferocious, burning gaze.
68. *Ambikādevi*: Pārvati.
69. *Mahāliṅgadeva*: Śiva.
70. *phases of liṅga, jaṅgama, and prasāda*: reference to the six-phase system of Vīrásaivism, known as the *ṣaṭsthala siddhānta*. For details see Ramanujan, trans., *Speaking of Śiva*, Appendix I, pp. 169–174.

71. *Nandikeśvara*: manifestation of Śiva who is most often represented in the form of a bull as Śiva's vehicle. See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 455–460. Also known as Nandi, Nandīśvara, and Nandīśa.
72. *no body except for the devotees*: among Vīraśaivas, devotees are considered to be the body of Śiva. She is asking if he is speaking only in this general sense.
73. *Austerities of Śilāda*: accounts of the birth of Nandikeśvara are found in the ŚP and elsewhere. The version contained in the LP, 1.42–44 (AITM, vol. 5, pp. 169–179), shares many features with the one found here.
74. *kṛta ... kali age*: the reference here is to the four classical ages in which dharma, or the rule of law and right, progressively deteriorates until the dissolution, after which the cycle begins anew.
75. *Śambhu*: Śiva.
76. *five fires*: *pañcāgni*, refers to *pañcatapas*. "The fires to which an ascetic who practices self-mortification exposes himself, viz. one fire towards each of the 4 quarters, and the sun overhead," M. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, S.V. *pañcatapas*. "In summer let him expose himself to the heat of five fires; during the rainy season, live under the open sky, and in winter be dressed in wet clothes, (thus) gradually increasing (the rigor of) his austerities," *The Laws of Manu*, trans. George Bühler, p. 202.
77. *tortoise . . . cardinal elephants*: in Hindu mythology, the earth is said to rest on the back of a great tortoise, and each of the cardinal points of the compass is said to be supported by an elephant.
78. *lord of speech*: Brahma.
79. *Hari*: Viṣṇu.
80. *Aja and Acyuta*: Brahma and Viṣṇu.
81. *Dakṣa's sacrifice*: reference is to the purāṇic story found, e.g., in ŚP 2.2.26–43 (AITM, vol. 1, pp. 395–473) and in LP 1.99–100 (AITM, vol. 6, pp. 553–558); also see O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, pp. 118–125.
82. *husband of Śrī*: Viṣṇu.
83. *Devendra*: Indra, king of the gods.
84. *Śrīdhara*: Viṣṇu.
85. *apavarga*: liberation.
86. *śruti*: literally, "that which has been heard." It refers to the Vedas, which are believed to be revealed texts.
87. *smṛti*: literally, "that which has been remembered." It refers to the body of tradition, authored by human teachers.
88. *tattva*: Vīraśaivas see the evolution of the universe as a systematic evolution of thirty-six *tattvas* or categories from Śiva or Niṣkaḷāliṅga (the absolute in its formless form). See Malledevaru, *Essentials of Vīraśaivism*, pp. 41–54 for a discussion entitled "The Thirty-six Tattvas and the Evolution of the Universe."
89. *the great liṅga*: the liṅga as manifested in the form of the guru who initiates the devotee into the Vīraśaiva path.
90. *prāṇa liṅga*: the liṅga as manifested in the life breath of an individual devotee.

91. *Hinguḷeśvara-Bhāgavāṭi*: Bāgĕvāḍi (Bhāgavāṭi), now the headquarters of the taluk by the same name in Bijapur District of Karnataka. In the twelfth century, Ingaḷeśvara (Hinguḷeśvara), a small village about six miles away, was more prominent than Bāgĕvāḍi and thus the hyphenated form of the name is used to indicate the Bāgĕvāḍi near Ingaḷeśvara. Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, pp. 156–158.
92. *ordinary rituals*: *veḍa nomulu*, literally, "futile, paltry rituals." *Nomulu* are rituals performed by Hindu women for obtaining sons or for sustaining their auspicious status. The adjective *veḍa* reflects the lack of respect for Hindu rituals among Vīraśaivites.
93. *five foods*: *pañcabhakṣyamulu* are: *bhakṣyamu* ("that which is chewed"), *bhojyamu* ("that which is eaten without mastication"), *lehyamu* ("that which is licked"), *coṣyamu* ("that which is slurped or sucked"), and *pānīyamu* ("that which is drunk").
94. *lord of the nine bulls*: the original has *nava nandinātha*; reference is to the temple in Mahanandi, in Nandyala, Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh, where there are nine bulls around the image of *mahānandi*, "the great bull."
95. *Moon Bearer*: Indukaḷādhara, an epithet of Śiva because he wears the crescent moon in his hair.
96. *prasāda*: literally, "favor, kindness, grace," it generally refers to the food that is presented as an offering and then distributed to be eaten. In BP, the Vīraśaivas always offer food to the liṅga before eating it and never eat anything that is not offered to the liṅga.
97. *Nectar Rays*: the moon.
98. *White Colored*: Śiva.
99. *He seated himself in the lotus posture*: the following passage is a description of the kuṇḍalinī's ascent to the *sahasrāra* at the summit of the skull and its union with Śiva through the process of *kuṇḍalinīyoga*. The implication is that Basaveśvara attains the goal of this form of yoga even before he is born. He is fully realized before he leaves his mother's womb. For a full treatment of this yoga, see Sir John Woodroffe, *The Serpent Power*.
100. *purify the elements* (*bhūtaśuddhi*): see Woodroffe, *The Serpent Power*, p. 257.
101. *four-petaled lotus . . . thousand-petaled downward-facing lotus*: for a brief treatment of the characteristic features of these, see Mircea Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, pp. 241–246.
102. *my womb has become like a crab's*: it is a folk belief that the young of the crab is born by rending the womb of the mother and killing her.
103. *self-lit supreme light*: Śiva.
104. *half-born*: the original is *ardhodaya*. We preferred to translate the word literally here. In astrology, ardhodaya is an auspicious combination of planets and day and time. Desai says: "What is Ardhodaya? Ardhodaya, like Mahasivaratri, is an auspicious yoga, i.e., combination, on a Sunday, by day time, of Rohini Nakshatra, Vyatipata yoga and Maha Amavasya. In the absence of a definite Saka and cyclic years this date can not be verified. . . . This ardhodaya appears to be an after thought, an attempt to connect Basavesvara, a great Saiva devotee with a Mahasivaratri, the most sacred

festival dedicated to Śiva." *Basavesvara and His Times*, p. 282. This problem, however, did not deter Badala Ramayya from investigating the astrological occurrences of ardhodaya in the twelfth century and determining to his satisfaction that January 21, 1140, was the date when Basava was born. Badala Ramayya, *Basavesvaravacanālu*, pp. 51–62.

105. *ritual of associating a body with a liṅga*: in a later story, we see how important it is that this is not delayed for even a short time. See "The Story of Savarada Nācayya," chap. 7, p. 260.

106. *Kappaḍisaṅgameśvara . . . Kūḍalisaṅgameśvara*: alternate names for the god Śiva, who dwells at Kūḍalisaṅgama. In this instance, Somanātha uses the name of the deity in the first instance as the name of the place. "Sangama or Kūḍala Sangama, is now a village in the Hungund Taluka of Bijapur District. The name connotes a confluence and the place is situated at the juncture of the two rivers, the Kṛṣṇā with its tributary, the Malaprabhā. The Kannada prefix *kūḍala* also means confluence. The village Sangama is situated about a furlong away from the confluence. But the temple of Sangamēśvara is erected just on the brow of the confluence itself. The site of the confluence below is graced with a modest *maṇṭapa* with a *Linga* installed in it. Sangama is renowned as a great *tīrtha* or sacred place, visited by thousands of pilgrims all round the year. . . . The Sangamēśvara temple is of about the eleventh century. . . . In the sanctuary, Sangamēśvara is seen in the form of a coarse Linga of moderate size and stature." Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, p. 162.

107. *five great musical instruments*: probably *maddela* (a small drum), *sannāyi* (a double-reed wind instrument), *vīṇa*, *paṭahamu* (war drum), and *śaṅkhamu* (conch).

108. *Malahara*: Śiva.

109. *thread ceremony* (*vaḍugu* or *upanayanamu*): the ceremony in which a boy becomes a full-fledged member of his caste (brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, or vaiśya). It is regarded as a second birth. The ceremony includes the investiture of the boy with a sacred thread that he is required to wear from that day onward. When brahmins and others who wear the sacred thread become Vīraśaivas, they remove the thread and thus denounce their previous caste associations. The brahminic thread ceremony is performed only for men, whereas women also go through the Vīraśaiva ritual of initiation (dīkṣa).

110. *offspring of a compassionate guru*: the Vīraśaiva receives a liṅga from his guru and is said to be "born out of the hand of the guru."

111. *oblations of clarified butter*: a brahmin ritual of offering clarified butter to the gods through burning it in the fire.

112. *thread-polluted brahmins*: (*trāṭimālalu*): probably the most derogatory description of brahmins, who wear the sacred thread. They are equated with the mālas, the lowest, untouchable caste in Hindu society, because they wear the thread, *trāḍu*.

113. *cords of Karma*: indicating both the sacred thread given at the ceremony, as well as the responsibility of performing karma (rituals), which one accepts after initiation into brahminhood.

114. *rudrākṣa*: a nutlike seed that is used by Śaivas for rosary beads. It is one of the *aṣṭāvaraṇa* or eight aids in the realization of the Absolute. The wearing of it is believed to produce many beneficial results.
115. *Basava has decapitated Brahma*: Brahma originally had five heads, but one was cut off by Śiva. In another version, from the Vāmana Purāṇa, Śiva nipped off Brahma's fifth head with his fingernail. Here, Basava, who is equated with Śiva, is credited with the act. See *Vāmana Purāṇa* 2.32–36; for other versions of this myth see Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva*, pp. 259–265.
116. *Abhava*: epithet of Śiva, "he who has no birth."
117. *no distinction according to caste*: this is one of the most important principles of the Vīraśaivas, and one that clearly sets them apart from other Śaiva traditions, which accept caste distinctions. The only distinction made by the Vīraśaivas is between those who have been associated with a liṅga through an initiation ceremony and those who have not had such an initiation. A Vīraśaiva can be of any caste background.
118. *āgamas*: both the Vīraśaivas and the brahmin Śaivas, like Basava's father, recognize the authority of the āgamas, but the interpretation differs. The āgamas are the basic authoritative texts of the Vīraśaivas as well as of the Kashmiri Śaivas and the Śaiva Siddhāntins. According to Gonda, "the *āgamas* are neither intended to serve as encyclopaedias nor meant to be handbooks of such subjects as find a place in them, sculpture, architecture, the foundation of temples, the procedures of image installation, etc. On the contrary, the contents, however diverse they may appear to be, concentrate on one subject, viz. religious practice. Hindu religion being a code of conduct and moral precepts, the ritually correct behavior rather than the dissemination and acceptance of a given doctrine, these works teach what the devotees should know and especially what they should do or leave undone in order to attain eternal bliss, that is, union with Śiva." Jan Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit*, p. 166.
119. *Nandi ... plays an important role*: the thread ceremony includes a ritual called *nandimukham*, in which the young boy to be initiated sits along with his peers, the uninitiated boys, for a meal and is pulled away from eating before he finishes. This event ritually registers two things: first, he is not a young boy anymore, and second, he can no longer leave his meal before completing it.
120. *And the mantra ... deity*: the mantra here is the *gāyatrī*, which is taught to a boy at the time of his thread ceremony and which he repeats daily. It is addressed to the sun and goes thus: *om bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ tatsavitṛvareṇyaṃ bhargodevaśyadhīmahi dhiyoyonaḥ pracodayāt*.
121. *pālāśa (moduga)*: a stick of this wood is held in the hand by the *brahmacārin*, the boy who is going through the thread ceremony.
122. *The wisps of hair ... mark on his forehead*: The young boy's head is shaven leaving five wisps of hair, *pañcaśikhalu*, and he is given a mark on his forehead (*medhāviboṭṭu*) with ashes from the fire lit as part of the ritual. The boy goes begging as a confirmation that a brahmin adult has to live by

begging. In this description a regular comparison is made between the ritual details of the thread ceremony and Śiva's garb as a mendicant.

123. *prāṇa*: breath; other winds circulating in the body are *vyāna, apāna, udāna,* and *samāna*.
124. *twenty-four syllables*: the *gāyatrī* (see note 120 above) has twenty-four syllables.
125. *Sānkhyāyana's philosophy*: "The whole of Indian literature, so far as it touches philosophical thought, beginning with the *Mahābhārata* and the law-book of Manu, especially the literature of the mythological and legendary *Purāṇas* has been saturated with the doctrines of the sānkhya. Kapila [the founder of the system] did not attempt to find unity in everything, but sought to maintain variety. He not only rejected the *Brahman*, the All-Soul, but emphatically denied the existence of God. It is true that he continued to hold the ordinary Indian views to the extent of believing in the transient forms of popular religion, in gods, demi-gods, and demons, together with heavens and hells; but this popular faith had nothing to do with a real eternal God in the theistic sense. The system is therefore in India described explicitly as atheistic." *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 2, pp. 189–190.
126. *the all-seeing*: the original has part of a Sanskrit quotation here, *viśvataḥ cakṣu ṛta*.
127. *no one is superior to the guru*: "Among the eight aids (Aṣṭāvaraṇas), the spiritual preceptor (Guru) is given the first place, because it is he, who initiates the novice into the spiritual knowledge, by granting him the threefold Liṅga. Hence the *Guru* is given preference to even *Liṅga* (God)." Malledevaru, *Essentials of Vīrasaivism*, p. 67.
128. *six-syllabled mantra*: *om namaśśivāya*, meaning "om, obeisance to Śiva." This mantra is frequently repeated by Śaivas.
129. *eight-limbed path*: *yama* (physical discipline that includes nonviolence, truth, nonstealing, nonpossession, and celibacy); *niyama* (mental discipline that includes purity, penance, joy, study, and worship); *āsana* (sitting in a comfortable posture); *prāṇāyāma* (breath control); *pratyāhāra* (control of mind); and *samādhi* (deep meditation).
130. *Forehead Eye*: Śiva.
131. *purifier*: fire.
132. *three junctures* (*sandhyalu*): morning, noon, and evening.
133. *if you plant a mango seed . . . margosa tree*: a popular proverb in Telugu.
134. *cursed by Gautama*: the sage Gautama cursed brahmins that they shall be excluded from the Vedas and vedic rituals. This was because brahmins created an illusionary cow and caused Gautama to kill it. Gautama had to bring the river Gangā to the earth to revive the cow. Realising later that he had been deceived by the brahmins Gautama cursed them. *Varāha Purāṇa*, 19.15–39.
135. *it will not caw like a crow*: relates to a folk belief that *koyila*, the songbird, cannot hatch and raise its own offspring. She lays eggs in a crow's nest for

the mother crow to hatch. The crow cannot distinguish her own offspring from the koyila, because both birds are black, until the koyila caws, unlike a crow, when the mother bird throws the koyila out.

136. *Cĕnnayya . . . Cerama . . . Kakkayya*: famous Śaiva saints of the period. Basava is rejecting his own father for Śaiva saints, for whom he feels more affinity.
137. *seven means of support*: guru, mother, father, son, knowledge, god, and patron.
138. *Nāgamāmba*: a great devotee in her own right, Nāgamāmba or Nāgāmba is the mother of Cĕnnabasava, the nephew of Basava.
139. The house of *Phaṇihāri*: Śaiva temple.
140. *Mādāmba's brother*: Basava's maternal uncle, since Mādāmba is his mother. The relationship between a man and his maternal uncle is particularly close in the Telugu country.
141. *white-bodied god*: Śiva.
142. *Bijjala*: Kālacuri king of Kaḷyāṇa, circa A.D. 1162–1167; cf. Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, pp. 1–107. Also see chap. 7, note 68.
143. *vīṇa*: an Indian musical instrument with large gourd resonators at either end of the sounding board.
144. *liṅgapasāyita*: a form derived from *liṅgaprasāditam*, "that which is given by the liṅga," a sword that Basava carried.
145. *yojana*: a distance of about twelve and a half miles.
146. *king of the serpents*: Śeṣa; he has a thousand tongues and is also supposed to be the greatest grammarian.
147. *gold mountains*: the mythological mountain, Meru, is made of gold.
148. *Avimukta*: Varanasi.
149. *Saṅgayyadeva*: same as Saṅgameśvara.
150. *Śūli*: Śiva, "he who carries the trident."
151. *Kūḍalisaṅgayya*: same as Kūḍalisaṅgameśvara.
152. *You have expanded . . .* : in this paragraph, the author, Somanātha, is addressing his patron, Saṅga, as he concludes his first chapter.
153. *This is the work of . . .* : this formal conclusion is repeated word for word, except for the number of the chapter, at the end of each chapter.

CHAPTER II

1. *churning of the liṅga* (*liṅga mathana*): cf. *Kaivalya Upaniṣad*, 1–11: *ātmānam araṇim kṛtvā praṇavaṁ cottarāraṇim; jñāna-nirmathanābhyāsāt pāśaṁ dahati paṇḍitaḥ*. S. Radhakrishnan, trans., *The Principal Upaniṣhads*, p. 929.
2. *commander-in-chief* (*daṇḍanāyaka*): a leader of an army. Although Baladeva and later Basava bear this title, there is no instance in BP where either of them actually exercises this kind of authority.
   joined the pramathas: a Śaivite way of saying that he died.
3. *Does his sister . . . his position*: in the Kannada area, a sister's sons (who are also sons-in-law because of the practice of cross-cousin marriage) stay at

home and take charge of the family's affairs, whereas a man's sons are obliged to leave home and make a life elsewhere.

4. *Nevertheless . . . Please come*: Basava is being appealed to on the basis of responsibility for people in the human world rather than a desire for freedom from rebirth—precisely the reason he was sent to the human world in the first place.
5. *Kalyāṇa*: now a small town (25,592 people in the 1971 census) known as Basava Kalyan in Bidar District in the extreme northern part of Karnataka State, it was once the capital of the most powerful kingdom of the Deccan, the Cāḷukyas (tenth to twelfth centuries). At the time of the events remembered in BP, the Cāḷukya kingdom had been absorbed by the Kālacuris and had passed its high point.
6. *āmaḍa*: a distance of about eight to ten miles.
7. *three defilements*: *āṇavamala*, *māyāmala*, and *kārmikamala*, defilements resulting from matter (*aṇu*), illusion (*māya*), and past actions (*karma*), respectively.
8. *Auspicious women*: women who are not widows.
9. *Nandi dancers*: probably people who danced holding bull emblems in their hands. As with many of the musical and dancing traditions mentioned in BP, the nature and significance of this tradition is unknown.
10. *Kūḍali Tripurāntaka*: probably a reference to the god Tripurāntaka (Śiva), equivalent to Kūḍalisaṅgameśvara.
11. *Sonnalikapuram*: modern Sholapur in Maharaṣṭra.
12. *Saurāṣṭra*: modern-day Gujarat.
13. *pratijoka . . . gajjĕparuvu*: kinds of dances about which little information is available.
14. *Rāyuḍu*: reference to an unknown king or other important personage.
15. *Mādavva of Bhāgavāḍa*: Mādavva is an alternate form of Madāmba, and Bhāgavāḍa is an alternate form of Bhāgavāṭi.
16. *Saṅgayyadeva*: Saṅgameśvara.
17. *previous twelve ministers*: the implication seems to be that he is given a higher status than the other ministers in the court, who will remain and serve under him.
18. *Śivarātri*: "the night of Śiva," the new-moon night of the month of Māgha (February–March). It is the most auspicious time for the worship of Śiva, and the devotees remain up the entire night as part of the worship.
19. *the caste of devotees*: once a Vīraśaiva has been initiated, he no longer has a caste, and any discussion of his former caste is avoided.
20. *never to deviate from being a servant*: even the most advanced Vīraśaivas humbly serve the devotees of Śiva, for those devotees are considered to be equal to Śiva himself.
21. *never to let Śiva win, even in a dream*: an example of a curious feature that is common to Indian devotionalism of many types. One way to get close to a chosen god is to strive with that deity. The devotee always wins.
22. *prāṇa liṅga*: the form of liṅga that dwells in the individual life-breath. It is the most intimate liṅga to the devotee.

23. *six enemies of life*: *kāma* (sexual desire), *krodha* (wrath), *lobha* (covetousness), *moha* (lust), *mada* (arrogance), and *mātsarya* (envy).
24. *to ask for refuge* (*śaraṇu*): it is a kind of greeting that Vīraśaivas use whenever they meet a fellow devotee.
25. *nine types of sentiments* (*nava rasamulu*): the nine *rasas* of Indian aesthetics. See chap. 1, note 63.
26. *fruit of the oyster*: pearls.
27. *crocodile festoons*: festoons shaped like crocodiles, or possibly decorated with crocodile motifs.
28. *image of the bull*: the banner of the Kālacuris was a golden bull. The banners might also bear this image in honor of Basava.
29. *shaped like open hands* (*vyāsahastākṛti*): we translated the phrase literally. An alternate reading could be that the wind socks were shaped like the hand of sage Vyāsa. A story in *Kāśīkhaṇḍamu* narrates how Vyāsa's hand was rendered stiff and immobile when he praised Viṣṇu, out of ignorance. Srīnātha, *Kaśikhaṇḍamu* 7.103–110.
30. *cāgu! baḷā!*: an exclamation or appreciation used in performances.
31. *eight-limbed devotion* (*aṣṭāṅga bhakti*): see chap. 1, note 129.
32. *yokes* (*kāvaḷḷu*): a *kāvaḍi* is a wooden frame that fits over the shoulders with strings on either end for carrying heavy loads.
33. *ash-wearers*: the jaṅgamas who cover their entire bodies with ashes.
34. *Cĕnnabasava*: the nephew of Basava, his sister's son. For a brief account of what is known of this Śaiva saint, see S. S. Bhoosnurmath and Armando Menezes, eds., *Śūnyasampādane*, vol. III, pp. 1–5. A sixteenth-century Kannada work, the *Cĕnnabasava Purāṇa* by Virūpakṣa Paṇḍita, focuses on his life, but is of course far removed in time from his actual lifetime. There is also a late Telugu *Cĕnnabasava Purāṇamu* by Attanūri Pāpakavi.
35. *two kinds of karma*: *sañcita*, the karma accrued in the past, and *āgāmi*, the karma of the future.
36. *He has overcome . . . juice*: there are two aphorisms bearing on the progress of a devotee: *markaṭanyāya*, the style of the monkey, which clings to the object it acquires, and *vāyasaphalanyāya*, the style of the crow, which sucks the juice of the fruit it acquires and then discards it.

    We followed Bandaru Tammayya's interpretation (Tammayya, BP, pp. 589–560) in translating this passage. We feel, however, that this interpretation does not render the passage entirely clear.

    Piḍuparti Somanātha's verse rendering of this passage (PBP, verse 2.45), which is also unclear reads:

    > *ramaṇa bipīlikāvanacaradbhayanīti natikraminci kā*
    > *kamadhurasatphalambu gati grakkuna muktata jĕndi*

    The translation we offer here of this passage is tentative.
37. *Basava Rāja*: the term *rāja* means a king or noble and is usually added as a term of respect at the end of the names of *kṣatriya* men. It is also often added

to the names of brahmins who perform administrative jobs. See also chap. 1, note 40.

38. *six paths*: the six paths of meditation are: *bhuvanādhva, padādhva, varṇādhva, kaḷādhva, tattvādhva,* and *mantrādhva.*
39. *Allama Prabhu*: for a brief account of what is known of his life, see S. C. Nandimath et al., eds., *Śūnyasampādane,* vol. I, pp. 1–8, and for his philosophy, teachings, and writings, see pp. 9–360.
40. *destroyer of death*: Śiva.
41. *seven elements* (*saptadhātu*): blood, marrow, fat, flesh, bone, lymph, and semen.
42. *Suriya Cauḍarasu*: cf. "The Story of Suriya Cauḍarasu," chap. 5, pp. 190–192.
43. *Poison Throat*: same as Black Throat. See chap. 1, note 21.
44. *both kinds of prasāda*: liṅga prasāda, the food that has been offered to a liṅga, and jaṅgama prasāda, the food that has been offered to a jaṅgama.
45. *daughter of the mountain*: Pārvati.
46. *Ambika*: Pārvati.
47. *śarabha*: a fabulous animal with eight legs, stronger than the lion and the elephant.
48. *crore*: ten million.
49. *She gave ashes*: a ceremony symbolizing the invitation to a meal.
50. *non-twice-born*: in the brahminical scheme, people of the brahmin caste are twice-born. Their second birth, beginning from the thread ceremony (see chap. 1, note 109), makes them equal to the gods. Defining the pramathas as "non-twice-born" indicates that they are gods without such an initiation.
51. *ability to atomize themselves*: *aṇima,* one of the eight *siddhis* or powers acquired through yoga.
52. *Viriñci*: Brahma. *Hari*: Viṣṇu.
53. *all-giving cow . . . diamond . . . tree*: these three appear very frequently in Telugu and Sanskrit literature and mythology as sources of the good things in life. They are supposed to be possessions of the gods.
54. *they tied eggplants*: the most popular variety of eggplant in South India has an oval shape rather than the bell shape of the kind grown in the United States or the long, slender shape of the oriental variety. This shape is very close to the shape of many liṅgas, which are oval rather than long and slender.
55. *lord of the bulls*: Nandi.
56. *Balleśu Mallayya*: a *ballamu* is a measuring vessel. Balleśa is Śiva manifested in a ballamu.
57. *kicked them with his foot*: even to touch another individual with one's foot is a great insult in the Hindu traditon. No one would step over an icon, let alone kick it.
58. *Kailāsa*: Śiva's dwelling place, which is identified as a mountain in the Himalayas.
59. *droppings became a liṅga . . . turn into a liṅga*: there are many stories of diverse objects becoming *sthāvara liṅgas* (a liṅga that is worshiped in a fixed place

as distinct from a liṅga that is worn on the person). Each of the liṅgas has a story connected with it. BP narrates some of them. See also Hank Heifetz and Velcheru Narayana Rao, trans., *For the Lord of the Animals*, pp. 16 and 123.

60. *Bāvūri Brahmayya*: see chap. 4, p. 136.
61. *Moon Wearer*: Śiva.
62. *sacred designs* (*mruggu*): designs that are made on the ground or floor in the morning. They are ordinarily made of rice powder or lime.
63. *sorghum*: *jonnalu* is a good grain that is still widely cultivated in the drier uplands of the interior of the peninsula. It is nutritious and thrives under conditions that do not allow the cultivation of rice. Its round kernels (especially those of the white variety) are frequently likened to pearls.
64. *māreḍu*: Skt. *bilva*. The leaves of this tree are especially sacred to Śiva.
65. *ask for inexhaustible grain bins*: the reference is to Deḍara Dāsayya; see chap. 4, p. 141. Also see chap. 6, pp. 207–212.
66. *as Siriyāla did*: for "The Story of Siriyāla" and "Saṅgaḷavva Calls Her Son," see chap. 4, pp. 144–147.
67. *Karikāla*: this name appears from time to time in BP, but it is not clear if every occurrence refers to the same person or several different persons. There does not seem to be any further mention of this incident.
68. *ask you to be my pimp*: the reference is to Ŏḍaya Nambi, chap. 4, pp. 156–169.
69. *Guṇḍayya*: see chap. 4, p. 168.
70. *Kāṭakoṭayya . . . boils the milk for you*: this is perhaps the most complete list of temple servants to appear in Telugu literature. The names of the servants are all those of important Vīraśaiva saints, and virtually all appear elsewhere, usually with their own story, in BP or PC.
71. *Bibba Bācayya . . . first bite* (*manupālu paḍu prasādulu Bibba Bācayya garu*): the meaning here is not clear, but probably the man is a food taster such as those employed by kings.
72. *Jagadeva is the commander-in-chief*: earlier in the BP Basava has taken over the duties of commander-in-chief, but in this list Jagadeva is still cited in that capacity.
73. *before you destroyed the cities*: see chap. 1, note 18.
74. *before you were married to Gauri*: see ŚP 2.3 (AITM, vol. 2, pp. 475–706).
75. *before the creation of this universe*: e.g., see ŚP 5.29–31 (AITM, vol. 4, pp. 1573–83).
76. *before your eight forms existed*: according to LP, the eight forms are as follows: Śarva, the sustainer of the universe; Bhava, the great Ātman who enlivens the world; Paśupati, the lord who pervades the universe; Īśāna, the lord in the form of the wind, the sustainer of all embodied beings; Bhīma, in the form of the firmament, the bestower of all desires on all living beings; Rudra, the lord in the form of the sun, the bestower of devotion on his devotees; Mahādeva, in the form of the moon, the source of all gentle objects; Ugra, the sacrificer. See LP 2.13 (AITM, vol. 6, pp. 648–650; also see

ŚP 3.3.2 (AITM, vol. 3, pp. 1074–75). According to the *Brāhmaṇas*, "he is said to have applied to his father eight successive times for a name, and that he received in succession the names Bhava, Sarva, Paśupati, Ugradeva, Mahāndeva, Rudra, Īśāna, and Aśani." Dowson, *Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, p. 296.

77. *before Brahma and Hari were born*: see ŚP 7.2(1).13 (AITM, vol. 4, pp. 1817–20).
78. *A short distance*: the original has *erunela*, which means an area of land that can be ploughed with one ploughshare.
79. *Tirucit̤tambala*: no one by this name is known among the sixty-three Tamil *Nāyaṉmār*, to whom he seems to be assigned.
80. *Siddha Rāmayya*: one of the important Śaiva saints and the author of many *vacanas*. For a brief account of what is known of him, see S. C. Nandimath et al., eds., *Śūnyasampādane*, vol. I, pp. 199–205.
81. *Aja, Kālabuddha*: we listed the names as best we could. In some cases it is difficult to determine where one name ends and another begins.
82. *khecaras, siddhas, sādhyas, garuḍas, gandharvas*, and *uragas*: classes of demigods.
83. *eleven rudras*: "the hosts of Rudra, originally enumerated as eight (Bhava, Śarva, Paśupati, Ugra, Mahādeva, Rudra, Īśāna, and Aśani [existence, he who has arrows, lord of cattle, dread, great god, howler, ruler, and thunderbolt]), later as eleven (Mahan, Mātman, Matiman, Bhīṣaṇa, Bhayaṃkara, Ṛtudhvaja, Ūrdhvakeśa, Piṅgākṣa, Ruci, Śuci, and Rudra [great, noble, wise, terrifying, frightening, he who has the seasons as his banner, he whose hair stands up, tawney-eyed, brightness, purity and howler]). O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, p. 351.

    nine brahmas: Bhṛgu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Aṅgirasa, Atri, Kratu, Dakṣa, and Marīci are known as the nine brahmas.

    eight vasus: a group of eight gods, whose chief was originally Indra, then Viṣṇu; the eight original vasus were deities of day, water, the moon, the pole star, wind, fire, dawn, and light; later, the Aśvins, Ādityas, Rudra, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Kubera were regarded as vasus. O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, p. 356.
84. *lords of cardinal directions*: *Surapa* (Indra), east; *Agni*, southeast; *Yama*, south; *Daitya* (Nirṛti), southwest; *Varuṇa*, west; *Gandhavāha* (Vāyu), northwest; *Naravāha* (Kubera), north; *Haradiśānātha* (Soma), northeast.
85. *Tumburu and Nārada*: celestial musicians.
86. *Parameśa*: Śiva.
87. *I am the only devotee, and all the rest have your form*: this emphasizes that every devotee sees Śiva in every other devotee. When Basava looks around himself, he sees only Śiva and not individual devotees.

CHAPTER III

1. *paramour* (*miṅda*): the *miṅda jaṅgamas* are a particular kind of jaṅgamas who spend their time with prostitutes. According to the conventions of Vīraśai-

vism, anything that a jaṅgama wants he should have without any ethical questions being raised.

2. *silk cotton tree* (*būrugu*): the fruit of the būrugu tree does not have any juice or meat in it.
3. *cakora*: popular in Sanskrit poetry, this bird is said to subsist on moonbeams.
4. *babbili*: the rattan plant.
5. *cardinal elephant*: see chap. 1, note 77.
6. *The Foxes That Became Horses*: this story is told of the great Tamil Śaiva saint Māṇikka Vācakar. G. U. Pope gives an extended version of the episode, based on several Tamil works, in his translation of *Tiruvācagam*, pp. xx–xxvii.
7. *Pāṇḍya*: refers to the ruler of the Pāṇḍya country, one of the traditional three kingdoms of the far south of India. The other two are the Cera and Coḷa.
8. *Madhura*: Madurai in Tamilnad, South India.
9. *Cŏkka Nāyanāru*: the name of Śiva in the temple at Madurai. *Cŏkka* in Tamil means "the beautiful."
10. *Mountain Slayer*: Śiva.
11. *Elder sister*: in Telugu, kinship terms are used for intimate forms of address. What kinship term is used depends upon the age and social status of the individuals involved. Here, the speaker is addressing a courtesan in whose service she is employed.
12. *brother-in-law*: the man referred to is the prostitute's regular man. Thus, by extension, he is her husband and the servant woman's brother-in-law.
13. *venjāvaḷi . . . Gujarat silk*: we have translated literally those types of cloth that are suggestive of a pattern, color, place of origin, and so on. The others, for which no information is available, are simply transliterated.
14. *Immediately . . . completely amazed*: this, of course, brings to mind the famous scene in the *Mahābhārata* when Draupadi's garments are replaced by Kṛṣṇa as fast as they are torn away by Duḥśāsana in the Kaurava court.
15. *Iḍiguḍi Nāyanāru*: reference to an unknown story. This *Nāyanār* has not been identified in PP.
16. *Deḍara Dāsayya*: an individual by this name is the subject of a major story in BP, chap. 6, but this episode is not known elsewhere. In both instances, he is a weaver.
17. *Ballaha*: Iyaṟpakai, one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP, is credited with the same kind of gift.
18. *Mānakañjāra*: the story of Mānakkañcāran, one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP.
19. *sounds of the five great syllables*: (*pañcamahāśabdaravamulu*): this refers to the five syllables of the Śaiva mantra, *na-maḥ-śi-vā-ya*."
20. *king of demons* (*daityendra*): a reference to Rāvaṇa of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story.
21. *Indra*: the story of Indra's humiliation is found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. See chap. 1, note 134.
22. *Śūdraka*: a king by this name is mentioned in ŚP 5.39 (AITM, vol. 4, p. 1614), among the kings of the solar race, but we have not located any references to such a story.

23. *themes dealing with lechers and thieves*: this paragraph is a comment on the convention of poets who describe the activities of paramours and thieves whenever they describe sunset and darkness.
24. *he who wears Gaṅga on his head*: Śiva.
25. *Lady, why*: in each instance that follows, Saṅgayya asks about an item of the dress worn by a jaṅgama, and the courtesan interprets her dress in Śaiva terms.
26. *Vāmadevayogi*: an ancient sage, he is mentioned as the sage of the five-syllabled mantra. See LP 1.85 (AITM, vol. 5, 422–441).
27. *make our home their home*: meaning, "we make our home a home for the jaṅgamas."
28. *Jagadamba*: Pārvati.
29. *Dākṣārāma*: an important temple town on the Godavari River in present-day Andhra Pradesh; one of the five major Śaiva *ārāmas* (centers).
30. *dhūkaḷi, jhankaḷi*: these are apparently the names of certain kinds of dance tunes.
31. *Rudra Paśupati*: a *Nāyanār* by this name appears in PP, but there seems to be no direct connection between the two. In PP, he is a vedic scholar and attains Kailāsa chanting a Sanskrit hymn. Here he is a complete innocent, except that here, too, he is referred to as a *bhaṭṭāra*, "scholar."
32. *Ancient purāṇa: The Pĕriya Purāṇam.*
33. *Bharga*: Śiva.
34. *Pināki*: Śiva.
35. *his eyes never blinked*: this seems to have a double meaning. On one level, he is looking with childlike innocence and unblinking eyes. On another level, he seems to have acquired divine status, for it is only gods (*devas*) who do not blink their eyes (cf. *animiṣa*).
36. *Coḍa*: one of the three ancient divisions of South India, the Coḍa or Coḷa country was centered in what is now the northeastern part of Tamilnad.
37. *Nīla Nakka Nāyanāru*: Tirunīlanakkan in PP.
38. *Acyuta*: Viṣṇu.
39. *It is indeed very strange . . . live in a cremation ground*: the woman is referring to Śiva as he conducts himself as Mahāyogi.
40. *She poured oil*: here we have an example of devotion to a god manifested as the love of a mother for a child. This type of devotion is a common feature of the Kṛṣṇa cult but is not usually found in Śaiva sects.
41. *she did not let birds fly over his head*: to let birds fly over a child is considered bad luck in the Telugu country.
42. *Ŏḍaya Nambi*: the story of Ŏḍaya Nambi and Śiva appears in chap. 4, pp. 156–169. Though the story does not seem to match up precisely with the reference given here, Śiva is humiliated and comes away empty-handed because of his association with Nambi.
43. *Cerama Cakravarti*: Ceramān Pĕrumāḷ in PP.
44. *Piṭṭava*: cf. chap. 4, p. 160.
45. *Sāmavedulu's house*: Śiva enters the sacrificial enclosure of a Sāmavedi (a brahmin who is learned in the *Sāma Veda*, one of the Vedas) in the form of

an untouchable with a dead calf on his shoulders. His wife, Pārvati, follows him in the form an untouchable woman. The Sāmavedi and his wife receive them respectfully, washing their feet while the rest of the brahmins leave the place in fear. The Sāmavedi cooks the dead calf and feeds Śiva. Śiva is pleased and takes the brahmin couple along with the other brahmins in the neighboring thirty-six villages who were doing the sacrifice to Kailāsa. Cf. PC, pp. 133–145.

46. *Karikāḷavva*: Kāraikkaḷ Ammai in PP.
47. *Cĕnnayya*: see chap. 5, p. 192.
48. *Cir̊utŏṇḍa Nambi*: see, chap. 4, pp. 144–147.
49. *Nimmavva*: see chap. 4, pp. 144–149.
50. *Coḍavva*: cf. chap. 5, p. 192.
51. *Suriya Cauḍayya*: Suriya Cauḍarasu; cf. chap. 5, pp. 190–192.
52. *The parent . . . gives birth*: a popular folk saying in Telugu.
53. *Ammavva*: *amma* means "mother," *avva* usually means "grandmother."
54. *cow's milk*: milk of other animals, like goat or water buffalo, is considered ritually less desirable.
55. *pole*: a flat pancake made of wheat, legume, and unrefined sugar.
56. *maṭha*: a monastery.
57. *sixteenth-day festival*: just what festival is being referred to here is not known.
58. *Bhoganātha of Karaḍiga*: name of Śiva in Karaḍiga, a village in Karnataka.
59. *Story of Dīpadakaḷi*: Kaliyanār in PP.
60. *Kañci*: a famous religious and cultural center in Tamilnadu.
61. *Brahma subject to fate*: probably refers to the story of Śiva punishing Brahma for incest. See O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, pp. 25–35.
62. *five great instruments*: see chap. 1, note 107.
63. *Dīpadakaḷiyār*: Dīpadakaḷi.
64. *Lotus Eyes*: Viṣṇu. *Lotus Born*: Brahma. *performer . . . sacrifices*: Indra. *killer of the killer*: Yama.
65. *Kūttāḍi Nāyanāru*: the innocent man is seeing the dancing form of Śiva, or the Naṭarāja.
66. *Abhava*: Śiva, "he who is without birth."
67. *Devi*: Pārvati.
68. *Śrī Kāḷahasti*: an important Śiva temple in what is now the Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh. It is known as the Kailāsa of the South.
69. *Uḍumūri Kannappa*: Kaṇṇappan, one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP.
70. *ĕrukula*: a hill tribe of the Telugu country.
71. *gŏraga*: a Śaiva bhakta. The term is frequently used in a derogatory sense, and it is in this sense that the rude hunter uses it here.
72. *two wives fighting*: Gaṅga, who lives in Śiva's hair, and Pārvati, who shares his body, fight over the husband whom they share. There are folk songs describing the rivalry.
73. *Nambi*: cf. chap. 4, p. 157.
74. *because he had become unjust*: the reference here is to Brahma's incest with his daughter. See note 61 above.

75. Most of the foods mentioned here are desirable to the tribal hunter, but most are crude or repulsive for higher-caste people.
76. *Jīmūtavāhana, Śibi, Kīrtimukha*: the story of Kīrtimukha, the great gaṇa who is represented by a trunkless head and who guards the door to Śiva's temple, is found in ŚP 2.5.19 (AITM, vol. 2, p. 890n). Jīmūtavāhana and Śibi are known for sacrificing themselves to help people who sought refuge.
77. *Jalandhara*: a demon; see ŚP 2.5.14–24 (AITM, vol. 2, pp. 863–914).
78. *Gajāsura*: a demon; see ŚP 2.5.57 (AITM, vol. 2, pp. 1054–1060).
79. *Tāraka*: a demon; see ŚP 2.3.14–15 (AITM, vol. 2, pp. 525–533).
80. *Vyāghra*: a demon.
81. *Andhaka*: a demon. See O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, pp. 168–173.
82. *Mogaleru*: a river flowing by Śrī Kāḷahasti. It is named after the wild *mogali*, a flowering bush. In the Sanskritized texts, it is called the Suvarṇamukharī.
83. *five nectars* (*pañcāmṛta*): milk, curd, coconut or plantain, honey, and clarified butter.
84. *a spider* . . . : this is a variation of a portion of the story of how Śrī Kāḷahasti received its name. The name derives from *śrī* (spider), *kāḷa* (snake), and *hasti* (elephant). These three competed for the privilege of worshiping the liṅga. See Heifetz and Narayana Rao, *For the Lord of the Animals*, pp. 2–3.
85. *pāda water* (*pādodaka*): water that has been used to wash the guru's or, in this case, the linga's feet.
86. *three kinds of water*: water from the feet (pādodaka), water from the liṅga (liṅgodaka), and water given with the blessing of the deity (prasādodaka).
87. *Sarveśa*: "the lord of all," Śiva.
88. *father cut up his own son*: cf. chap. 4, pp. 144–147.
89. *pelted with stones*: cf. chap. 6, p. 205.
90. *caught with another man's wife*: see "The Story of Iyaṟpakai," one of the *Nāyaṉmār* in PP.
91. *did slave labor*: cf. chap. 4, p. 160.
92. *chicken lids* (*koḍirĕppa*): a disease of the eye.
93. *flowering* (*puvvu*): in Telugu, cataract is known as *puvvu*, "flower."
94. *ayira*: an eye disease that results in a red discharge.
95. *Nalla Nāyanāru*: Śiva.
96. *Lakṣmi's son*: Kāma.
97. *killing of a fetus*: see "The story of Kŏṭṭaruvu Coḍa" in chap. 4, p. 150.
98. *Nimmavva's son*: cf. chap. 4, pp. 148–149.
99. *Nambi . . . eyes . . . destroyed*: in PP, Nambi (Cuntarar) goes blind because he does not keep his word to his second wife.
100. *If Brahma . . . could not be seen by Brahma*: Brahma and Viṣṇu were fighting when Śiva appeared before them as a huge column of fire. Not knowing what it was, Brahma took the form of a swan and sought to reach the top, while Viṣṇu took the form of a boar and sought to reach the bottom. Both were unsuccessful in their attempts and had to acknowledge the supremacy of Śiva; see ŚP 1.7 (AITM, vol. 1, pp. 54–57).
101. *Rati's husband*: Kāma.

102. *same status as his head*: the head is the chief limb of the body and thus the most respected part.
103. *Gaṇanātha*: Gaṇeśa, the elephant-headed son of Śiva.
104. *fruits of the fourfold activity* (*caturvargaphalamu*): *dharma* (duty), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (sexual pleasure), and *mokṣa* (liberation).
105. *Tirukāḷatti*: Śrī Kāḷahasti.
106. *Even today . . .* : in the hall in front of the main shrine of Śiva in Śrī Kāḷahasti is an image of Kannappa.
107. *He played . . .* : an accurate translation of the following passage would require a thorough knowledge of the music of the time in which this poem was written. Since we have not found suitable scholarly work on the subject, our translation will only provide an idea of what the passage contains, and should not be depended upon without close reference to the original. Many of the names of instruments and technical terms have had to be simply transliterated.
108. *ṭhāyas*: musical progressions or scales.
109. *Mādirājayya visited . . .* : it is difficult to know what to make of this description of the forest-covered mountains around Śrīśailam. Perhaps the passage has a special meaning that is now lost (none of the Śaiva scholars who have written on BP mentions it), or perhaps it is a catalog that is recited primarily for the pleasure of the ear. In any case, it presents an awe-inspiring visual image of the place that is completely wrapped up with those things of importance to the Śaivas. The area around Śrīśailam is quite wild even today, and was even more so in the past before there were roads.
110. *hour* (*gaḍiya*): twenty-four minutes, or one-sixtieth part of a day.
111. *Pātāḷagaṅga*: literally, "water from the underworld," a bathing place in the Krishna River just below Śrīśailam.
112. *Mallarasu*: Mallikārjuna.
113. *Mādayya*: Mādirājayya.
114. *herdsman* (*golla*): herdsmen are favorite objects of ridicule among the Telugus, and they are usually considered somewhat crazy.
115. *woman . . . leaping into the fire*: a reference to the practice of suttee by which a widow is burnt on her husband's funeral pyre.

CHAPTER IV

1. *maḍivālu*: a respectable word for "washerman." The more common *cākali* has somewhat derogatory connotations.
2. *six enemies* (*ṣaḍvarga*): see chap. 2, note 23.
3. *Hipparigĕ*: village to the south of Kalyāṇa in the present-day Basavakalyan Taluk of Bidar District.
4. *Silver mountain*: Kailāsa.
5. *As he went through the streets . . . whatever they wanted*: even today washermen in Andhra are considered arrogant; although their status is low and their

caste unclean, their services are very much in demand, and they have a ritual role as purifiers.

6. *Cāki! Cāki!*: shortened form of *cākali*, "washerman"; reminiscent of *kāki*, "crow," also a derogatory word.
7. *śakti*: personified energy or power of a goddess and more particularly of Pārvati, the wife of Śiva.
8. *nāda and bindu*: words used by Śaivas to denote the liṅga. "The *Bindu* (circle) is the disc-like base (pītha) and *Nāda* (sound) is the line supervening the base. . . . In other words, the upper part of the *Liṅga* is regarded as Śiva, and the base . . . is regarded as Śakti." Malledevaru, *Essentials of Vīraśaivism*, p. 6.
9. *decapitated Brahma* . . . : see chap. 1. note 115.
10. *boya*: a tribe of hunters or herdsmen, but here they are mountain agriculturalists, doing slash-and-burn cultivation. They appear frequently in BP in a number of different contexts.
11. *man-lion*: Śiva killed the man-lion (*narasiṃha*) incarnation of Viṣṇu. ŚP 3.11–12 (AITM, vol. 3, pp. 1113–1122).
12. *touched his bell with its clapper*: Vīraśaiva jaṅgamas carry a bell that makes a humming sound when rubbed around the rim with a stick.
13. *Vīrabhadra . . . man-lion avatār*: See LP, chap. 96 (AITM, vol. 6, part 2, pp. 513–524).
14. *māla . . . goḍāri*: two untouchable castes of the Telugu country. The former is the equivalent of a pariah, and the latter, considered even lower, is the leather-working caste, also know as *mādiga*.
15. *Iruvadāṇḍāri* or *Iruvattu*: Ĕripatta Nāyanār, one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP. In that source, the flower gatherer is not actually killed, but his flowers are trampled into the ground.
16. *as his own life*: the original has *prāṇasthala*, a stage in the progress of the devotee in the Śaiva path. For a study of the ṣaṭsthala (six-phase) system, see Ramanujan, trans. *Speaking of Śiva*, pp. 169–174.
17. *Malahara*: "the destroyer of impurities," an epithet of Śiva.
18. *sorghum into liṅgas*: see chap. 2, p. 80.
19. *Kallinātha*: Śiva.
20. *yellow dust*: gold.
21. *Vīrabhadra*: a fierce son or form of Śiva, he is the mighty warrior who destroyed Dakṣa's sacrifice.
22. *Deḍara Dāsayya*: for more see chap. 6, pp. 207–212. Śaṅkaradāsi is a poor weaver, whereas Deḍara Dāsayya is a wealthy one who contracts to have others weave the cloth he sells.
23. *Duggaḷavva*: Deḍara Dāsayya's wife.
24. *profession* (*kāyakamu*): this is one of the first of many stories in BP that emphasize the great importance of following one's own profession or type of work and serving the liṅga through money earned from work.
25. *Masanaka . . . Kosanaka . . . Polaka . . . Kāṭipāpaḍu*: inferior folk deities.
26. *Mailāruḍu*: according to P. B. Desai, "Nurtured in Śākta environment, Mailāra Linga emerged as a popular deity, believed to be a manifestation of Śiva." Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, p. 116.

27. *Kāṭreḍu*: "the king of the forest." The worship of this deity is described in Dhūrjaṭi, *Śrī Kāḷahastīśvara Māhātmyamu*, III–49.
28. *eighteen yogic seats*: the Śakti cult, "associated with the system of Yōga and developed under esoteric practices and rituals, came to be known as the Tāntric sect. Its followers propitiated the goddess Śakti as yōginī and her shrines were designated Yōgapīṭhas or Śaktapīṭhas." Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, pp. 115–116. Desai mentions several of these, but which ones are the eighteen referred to here is not known.
29. *Govinda*: literally, "one who gives happiness to cows," it is a name of Kṛṣṇa, an avatār of Viṣṇu.
30. *five metals*: these five are given differently in different sources and include gold, silver, and copper.
31. *You always gave some grain . . . help you*: although this passage is not entirely clear, the point that Śaṅkaradāsi is making is plain. Deḍara Dāsayya has contracted out work to poorer weavers and advanced them cash or grain to cover their expenses, but when they have finished and the cloth is sold, they have gained nothing and are back where they started. Śaṅkaradāsi sees this as immoral. The tone of the passage is sarcastic.
32. *poor devotee*: that is, Śaṅkaradāsi.
33. *And so the days . . . with true devotion*: the story of Nimmavva is taken up again after "Saṅgaḷavva Calls Her Son."
34. *Siriyāla*: Ciṙuttŏṇṭar, one of the *Nāyaṉmār* in PP. The story of Siriyāla is one of the most popular Śaiva stories of South India, available in several oral and written versions. The written versions include the Tamil PP and a well-developed version by Śrīnātha, the great Telugu poet of the fifteenth century, in his *Haravilāsamu*. In 1974, Roghair collected a Telugu oral version incorporated into a local epic. Though following the basic story, the versions differ significantly in spirit and detail. In the Telugu oral version, the human pathos of the events comes through more clearly than the extremes of single-minded devotion found in BP. Again, in the oral version, the mother is the great devotee whose devotion Śiva elects to test. In all the other versions, it is the devotion of the father, who is relatively weak in the oral tradition, that is emphasized. In the other Telugu versions, the jaṅgama is a leper. See Roghair, *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, pp. 216–231.
35. *grandson*: in Telugu tradition, Śiva and his wife, Pārvati, always appear in the form of a couple who are very advanced in age; thus, the reader would know that Śiva would be in an aged form. Traditionally in Telugu, kinship terms are used also to address persons outside the family, as a mark of love and respect.
36. *perfect body and all the good qualities*: Siriyāla emphasizes this because the sacrificial lamb or kid must be free of any blemishes and well formed.
37. *pledge to accomplish . . . very day*: the acceptance of an invitation to a ceremonial dinner is treated almost as a contract.
38. *drank the water*: washing the guest's feet and sipping the water are a standard part of the guest-worship ritual. The guest is described as Poison Throat (Śiva), since a jaṅgama, by definition, is none other than Śiva.

39. *You have hidden the head*: in an oral version, the mother actually does hide the head with the intention of looking at it daily and remembering her son.
40. *Candananga*: maidservant.
41. *I told you that before, Siriyāla*: in the text, the jaṅgama does not make such a previous statement. It is possible that something was lost in the text. It is also possible that the writer, assuming the audience's acquaintance with the story, left the first statement unrecorded.
42. *I do have a son . . . protect us*: this is clearly a lie, told apparently to save the ritual. See chap. 5, p. 184.
43. *Come, my son*: in this section, the original has words suggesting the four directions in space: *pūrva* (east), *dakṣiṇa* (south), *paścima* (west), and *uttara* (north), in that order, indicating that she called her son facing each of the four directions in clockwise succession. The words are used in compounds that do not necessarily mean east, south, west, north. For example, *pūrva* here means "earlier" and *paścāt* means "later." The presence of the words, however, suggests the direction in which the lady was facing each time.
44. *god of the south*: Yama, the god of death and the judge of the dead.
45. *prince of yogis who rules the north*: Śiva.
46. *ascetic king*: Śiva.
47. *father's right shoulder is throbbing*: an auspicious omen for men.
48. *Tiruveṅgāṇi*: another name for Saṅgaḷavva.
49. *seven neighborhoods*: a city is always said to be made up of seven neighborhoods.
50. *merchant*: Siriyāla.
51. *restored Guṇḍayya's youth*: see chap. 4, p. 168.
52. *Bhogayya*: see chap. 7, p. 243.
53. *accepted gifts of clothes from Dāsayya*: although there are stories of Deḍara Dāsayya in BP, there is no mention of such an episode.
54. *went to Mānakañjāra's house*: a reference to the story of one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP, Māṉakkañcaraṉ. He cut off his daughter's hair at her own wedding and gave it to Śiva.
55. *Caṇḍeśa*: a reference to one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP, Caṇṭecuvarar. He cut off his own father's feet when the latter disturbed his offering to Śiva.
56. *Kāṭakoṭa*: see chap. 2, pp. 79–80.
57. *Narasiṅga Nāyanār*: One of the Nāyaṉmār in PP has the same name, Naraciṅkamunaiyaraiyan, but he was a subsidiary ruler and not a Coḍa, and the story focuses on his kindness to a man who wore ashes but was really a lecher and a sinner. Nothing is mentioned of any such story as is recounted here. The same story is, however, told of Kaḻaṟciṅkaṉ, another of the Nāyaṉmār, who was a Pallava king. Both names include the word *ciṅkan* (Skt., *siṁha*, "lion"), but otherwise they are different names.
58. *Drāviḍa*: Tamil.
59. *picked up a flower . . . smelled it*: flowers are never supposed to be smelled before being offered to a god. Smelled flowers are considered used flowers and are therefore polluted.

60. *bachelor*: the original has *vaḍugu*, which indicates that the priest is an unmarried young man.
61. *four classes of benefits* (*caturvargaphalamu*): see chap. 3, note 104.
62. These are the words spoken by Mācayya to Basava.
63. *Halāyudha*: "one who has a plough as his weapon."
64. *Kĕmbāvi Bhogayya*: see chap. 7, pp. 243–245.
65. *Nambi*: see pp. 156–169.
66. *Ballaha*: Bijjala.
67. *Ambika*: Pārvati, wife of Śiva.
68. *Brahma and Viṣṇu ... their chest, respectively*: Brahma keeps his wife, Sarasvati, in his mouth because she is the goddess of speech and learning. Viṣṇu keeps his wife on his chest.
69. *Tumburu, Nārada*: celestial musicians.
70. *Liṅgamūrti*: Śiva.
71. *Miṙumiṇḍa Nāyanāru*: Viranmiṇṭa Nāyanār in PP.
72. *Cegoṇḍa*: this is in the Cera country, or what is now Kerala.
73. *Cĕllam Tiruvālūru*: known in Tamil as Tiruvārūr or now simply as Ārūr, it is in present-day Tanjavur District of Tamilnad.
74. *spent a sleepless night in the house of Vālmīkideva*: that is, celebrated Śivarātri in the Śaiva temple in which Vālmīkideva was the manifestation of Śiva. For Śivarātri, see chap. 2, note 18.
75. *Ŏḍaya Nambi*: this is the great Cuntaramūrtti Nāyanār, the eighth or ninth century A.D. author of *Tiruttŏṇṭattŏkai*, the first complete listing of the Nāyaṉmār series. Cuntaramūrtti's original name was Nampi (Nambi) Ārūrar, but according to PP he was raised by a king and lived the life of a prince. The Telugu word *ŏḍaya* means "king" or "lord." In PP, Nambi marries a woman after he already has a wife and he ends up not being completely true to either one of them, but he is not really the "paramour jaṅgama" that he is shown to be in BP.
76. *temple of Vālmīkideva*: the Valmīkanātha temple in Tiruvārūr.
77. *Paramanācamma*: Paravai, the first wife of Cuntarar in PP.
78. *king of sages*: Śiva.
79. *daily allowance*: various individuals are allotted a portion of the day's prasāda from the temple, but according to PP, Śiva himself supplied all that Nambi needed.
80. *Vālmīkeśa*: Vālmīkideva.
81. *māḍa*: although it is not known precisely what the value of a māḍa is, the references in BP suggest that it was a considerable sum. According to Brown (1903), it is equal to half a pagoḍa, or about two rupees.
82. *He even acts ... harlot's house*: in PP, Śiva acts as a go-between when Cuntarar and his first wife are at odds because of his second marriage.
83. *this Nambi smambi and this Sambu smambu*: the original reads "*nambiyu gimbiyu ... sambuṇḍu gimbuṇḍu*." In Telugu, a nonsense word sounds the same except for the initial consonant *gi*, which is used to ridicule or make light of something. We feel that our rendering conveys this spirit in English.
84. *Vālmīkeśa ... suppressed ...* : this whole episode holds a much more promi-

nent place here than in PP, where Cuntarar fails to bow to the devotees but does so only because he does not consider himself worthy to meet them. In both cases, however, it is at this point that Śiva instructs him to sing the songs of the sixty-three Nāyaṉmār.

85. *toward the water drain*: Śaiva temples always open to the east, so this indicates that he is heading toward the south, where the drain to empty the water is located. The original reads *jalahāri dĕsaku*.
86. *womb house* (*garbha gṛhamu*): the focal point of the temple where the deity resides.
87. *tree that grants offspring*: probably the *rāvi cĕṭṭu*, or pipal tree (*fiscus religiosa*), which is often worshiped by women in Andhra with the hope of begetting sons.
88. *Bāṇā*: a *Bāṇa* appears in the *Rudrasaṁhitā* of ŚP as a demon who becomes a gaṇa, but the two do not seem to be related.
89. *Kalikāmadeva*: Kalikkāma Nāyaṉār in PP.
90. *Did my grandfather . . . your grandfather*: in PP, when Nampi (Nambi) is about to get married, Śiva comes in the guise of an old man and produces a document that says that Nampi's grandfather had agreed that he, Nampi, would be the old man's slave. This was upheld in court, and thus Cuntarar became a slave of Śiva. Here, the situation is reversed and Śiva serves Nambi.
91. *I am the servant*: this formula imitates that used by Cuntaramūrtti (Ŏḍaya Nambi in BP) in his Tiruttŏṇṭattŏkai (*patikam* 39 of Cuntaramūrtti, *Tevāram*), the first complete enumeration of the sixty-three Nāyaṉmār. See the forthcoming translation by D. Shulman, *Songs of the Harsh Devotee* (Department of South Asian Studies, University of Pennsylvania). Since the stories in PP do not begin this way, we have to assume that Somanātha followed Cuntarar's work in this instance.
92. *Ĕṇumūrti Nāyanāru*: Mūrtti in PP.
93. *city of Mṛḍa*: Kailāsa, the abode of Śiva.
94. *Kaḍamala Nambi*: Kaṇampulāṇṭār in PP.
95. *Guggulu Kaḷiyāru*: Kuṅkiliyakkalaya Nāyaṉār in PP. The name Guggulu comes from the Telugu word *guggilamu*, which is a kind of incense. We have translated it as "frankincense."
96. *mangaḷa sūtram*: the necklace on which the bride's token of marriage is hung. To sell it is to take the final step, so to speak, for it is not even supposed to be seen by anyone but the husband.
97. *serpent maidens*: a class of beings who dwell under the earth.
98. *Lord of Serpents*: Śiva.
99. *Arivāḷu Nāyanāru*: Arivāttāya Nāyaṉār in PP.
100. *Then, without the slightest . . . got ready to kick*: the technique used is not clear in this passage, but it seems that the knife is held steady while the neck is brought forcefully against it. Apparently, a technique of committing suicide.
101. *Aḍibharta*: Atipattan in PP.
102. *Eṇādhinātha*: Enātināta Nāyaṉār in PP.

103. *Cedi Vallabha*: "the king of Cedi," Mĕyppŏruḷ Nāyaṉār in PP.
104. *Karayūri Coḍa*: Pukaḻccolan in PP.
105. *Kaḷiyamba Nāyanāru*: Kalikkampan in PP.
106. *Iruvadāṇḍāri*: Amarnīti Nāyaṉār in PP.
107. *Paṇḍurāṅga*: Śiva.
108. *Yĕḷayadaṅguḷi Mārayya*: Iḷaiyamāraṅkuṭimārar in PP.
109. *vĕlama*: a person of a warrior-cultivator caste.
110. *Kummara Guṇḍayya*: Tirunīlakaṇṭa Nāyaṉār in PP. The Telugu word *kummara* means "potter."
111. *Pūsala Nāyanāru*: Pūcalār Nāyaṉār in PP.
112. *Black Throat*: Śiva.
113. *Tirumūladeva*: Tirumūla Nāyaṉār in PP. "To relieve some anguished cattle, Tirumūlar restored their dead herdsman to life by entering his corpse; when the man went home, he no longer recognized his wife and left her, returning to where he had left his original (Tirumūlar) body. By Śiva's grace it was no longer there, and the herdsman-saint went to Tiruvāṭuturai, sat under an *aśvattha*-tree and composed *Tirumantiram* (which is included in Tirumuṟai X)." Marr in "The *Pĕriya purāṇam* Frieze at Tārācuram," p. 280.
114. *Ciṙupuli*: Ciṟappuli in PP.

CHAPTER V

1. *Kinnara Brahmayya*: in the Sanskrit tradition, the kinnaras are celestial singers. In Telugu, the name is applied to a kind of vīṇa, a stringed instrument. Since Brahmayya (a common name of the period) plays this instrument, he probably got his name from it.
2. *the one to whom . . . the one who enjoys music*: Śiva.
3. *rūka*: used to refer to silver coins of various sizes; the precise value of the coin here is not known. Its modern equivalent is *rūpāyi*, rupee. Māḍa is probably a gold coin.
4. Basava saw in the image of Saṅgameśvara all the events that were happening.
5. The whore, apparently, felt insulted because her paramour had given up the sheep originally bought for her.
6. *Basava Rāja*: Basava.
7. *karmi*: one who is still subject to karma and thus, in this case, a non-Śaiva.
8. *Kicking . . . one's wife*: all these things are done by one or another of the devotees who appear in the BP.
9. *tie the calf . . . bull has given birth*: this saying is still current today in Telugu, often used to describe an unintelligent boss.
10. *once opened the door for Dāsi*: the saint best known for having caused temple doors to open was Tirunāvukkaracucuvāmikaḷ (Appar), the famous Tamil poet of the seventh century who sang the doors of a temple open. It is probably to this story that reference is being made.

11. *movable and immovable living beings*: this includes inanimate objects even though the word used is the Sanskrit *jantu*, "living being, animal."
12. *Throw us . . . into milk*: a proverb in which milk refers to anything desirable and water to anything not desirable.
13. *Kalaketa Brahmayya*: *kalaketa vidya* means juggling, or magic.
14. *Trivikrama*: Viṣṇu.
15. *Jina*: the deity of the Jains. The ram is the vehicle of Agni, the god of fire.
16. *Dugglavva . . . Saṅgaḷavva*: see chap. 4, p. 141 and p. 145.
17. *Mount Meru*: the golden mountain of Hindu mythology.
18. *Alas! . . .* : the next three paragraphs are said tongue in cheek, if not sarcastically.
19. *Moḷiga Mārayya*: a *moḷige* is a load of wood in Kannada, and the origin of his name.
20. *rice-washing water*: the water that is used to wash the rice is saved until it ferments, and then is fed to cattle.
21. *Maḍivālu Mācayya's grandchildren*: of all the saints that he could have claimed as his grandfather, this is the most sensitive one to bring up, because it was Mācayya who lectured Basava at length and humbled him after hearing the devotees singing songs that he had composed. Cf. chap. 4, p. 139.
22. *vessels of copper . . . potter's kiln*: copper is a sacred metal, whereas the potter's caste is one of the lowest.
23. *Saṅgayyadeva*: Śiva.
24. *Kannada Brahmayya*: the Vavilla edition, the Brown manuscripts, and the *Kannada Basavapurāṇa* give it as Kannada, whereas the Venkata Rao edition gives it as Kannaḍa. The former seems to be preferable, and thus the name should not be associated with the Kannada language or area. Rather, it seems likely that the name came from his profession. A *kannamu* is a hole (made for the purpose of burgling a house).
25. *He had a knife . . .* : Kannada Brahmayya is a professional burglar. In traditional South India, burglary is not always considered a crime. Certain castes practiced it as their caste profession and were often employed by villages as guards—a sure way of preventing burglary. In Sanskrit literature, there are descriptions of professional burglary; for instance, there is an elaborate description of the art of burglary in Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika* (Little Clay Cart). The *Kāma Sūtra* includes burglary as one of the sixty-four arts.
26. *Mūrkha gained Nagajeśa*: a reference to Mūrkkan, one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP. He was a professional gambler, and gave all that he won to feed devotees of Śiva.
27. *Kannappa*: see chap. 3, pp. 111–120.
28. *Nambi*: Ōḍaya Nambi. See chap. 4, pp. 156–169.
29. *Māṇḍavya*: a sage in the *Mahābhārata*. According to one story, as a child he put needles through flies and was later impaled for that sin. The Sanskrit text of the epic (1.101) says he used blades of grass.
30. *Caṇḍa*: see Caṇḍeśa chap. 7, p. 249.

31. *Brahma lost . . . because he lied*: reference to Brahma's false claim of seeing the end of Śiva's liṅga form.
32. *Cirutŏṇḍa . . . was taken*: see, chap. 4, pp. 144–147 and note 42.
33. *It is said that kings . . . reigns are over*: kings go to hell because in their position of authority they are bound to make decisions that will hurt people, and bound to make mistakes from time to time, as well.
34. *Cerama*: Ceramān Pĕrumāḷ in PP.
35. *Coḍa*: probably Koccĕṅkaṭcoḻaṉ, a just king whose story appears in PP.
36. *The Story of Musiḍi Cauḍayya*: a number of people are brought back from the dead in PP, but they are virtually always transported to Kailāsa immediately afterward. By way of contrast, Cauḍayya brings people and animals back from the dead so that they might go on living. This is reminiscent of biblical patterns of miracle working.
37. *musiḍi*: a tree bearing very bitter fruit, supposed to cause death if eaten.
38. *Bless you*: the original has *Śivamastu*, a Vīraśaiva blessing, "May it become auspicious."
39. *Lord of Cattle*: Śiva, or Basava, his vehicle, the bull.
40. *sage once drank all the oceans from the palm of his hand*: Agastya did so because the ocean had offended him, and because he wanted to assist the gods in their war with the demons. *Mahābhārata* 3.96–103.
41. *Gaṅga of the sky*: the sacred river Ganges is believed to have been born from the feet of Viṣṇu before it came to earth.
42. *May you live for a hundred years*: a common blessing or word of well-wishing in Telugu.
43. *associated the ascetic with a liṅga*: this is ordinarily done at the moment of birth, and therefore indicates a birth here.
44. *tastes on the tip of the devotee's tongue*: the original reads: *rasān bhaktasya jihvāgre*. We could not locate the source of this quotation, and out of context the phrase cannot be interpreted in any conclusive way. The translation we offer here is tentative.
45. *Dhūrjaṭi*: Śiva.
46. *Karikāla Coḍa*: mentioned in "The Story of Piṭṭavva," but this story does not seem to be available elsewhere.
47. *Bhīmeśa*: the name of Śiva in Dakṣārāma, Andhra Pradesh.
48. *Tĕlugu Jŏmmayya*: a hunter in the area around Kaḷyāṇa. It is not known for sure why he is called Telugu. It has been taken to be indicative of the area from which his devotee came, but we think it more likely that it indicates his caste. There is a caste, *tĕlaga*, in Andhra today.
49. *samādhi*: a state of deep yogic meditation.

CHAPTER VI

1. *Ekānta Rāmayya*: P. B. Desai thinks he belonged to the traditional orthodox Śaiva tradition and not to Basaveśvara's Vīraśaiva path. Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, pp. 120–125.

2. *came in disguise*: Vīraśaiva tradition believes that Ekānta Rāmayya had the ability to move unseen. Further, he was the one who was sent to Kailāsa to check if Basava really lived in the company of Śiva at the same time as he lived on the earth. See chap. 2, p. 84.
3. *Antaka*: Yama, the god of death.
4. *vasadi*: a Jain temple. We have retained the word in order to keep the distinction between the Jain and Śaiva temples.
5. *Tirunāvakariśa*: "the lord of divine speech." He is Tirunāvukkaracu, also know as Appar, one of the major Nāyaṉmār and Tevāram poets.
6. *sterling guru . . . living in an untouchable colony*: Murukaṉ, one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP. He was a brahmin but lived among untouchables.
7. *god who has bound the water in his locks*: Śiva held the river Gaṅga in his locks before she flowed onto the earth.
8. *Iruttāṇḍi*: Taṇṭiyaṭikaḷ in PP.
9. *Śrīkāḷi*: Cīkāḻi, a holy city near Cidambaram.
10. *Kumāra*: Skanda, the god of war and son of Śiva.
11. *Kulottuṅga Coḍa*: the first king by this name reigned ca. 1070–1120, whereas Tiruñāṉacampantar lived in the seventh century. The author was probably using the name Kulottuṅga as a general reference for any Coḍa monarch.
12. *Piḷḷa Nāyanāru*: Tiruñāṉacampantar, the first of the Tamil Tevāram poets. The name Piḷḷa ("child") reflects the tradition that he began composing hymns to Śiva at the age of three, and died as a young man on the day of his wedding.
13. *vĕlama who had been bitten by a snake*: reference to a story in PC (p. 293). A man from a vĕlama caste seeks a bride for himself from a mother of eight daughters and lives in her house serving her. The mother gives seven of her daughters away to others before the last one asks the vĕlama to take her away. They elope in the middle of the night, when a snake bites the man and he dies. Piḷḷa Nāyanāru takes pity on the girl and restores the vĕlama to life.
14. *king of Madhura*: probably Kūnpāṇṭiyan, one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP.
15. *Jñānasambandhi*: Piḷḷa Nāyanāru (Tiruñāṉacampantar).
16. *Maṅgayakkarasi*: Maṅkaiyarkkaraci, one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP, was a Coḍa princess who was married to the Pāṇḍya king. She is best known for the incident related here.
17. *Nalla Nāyanāru*: *nalla* means "good" in Tamil. This is an epithet of Śiva.
18. *five-year-old boy*: it will be remembered that Piḷḷa Nāyanāru is pictured as a child devotee.
19. *Let's not . . . merchant*: a stereotyped image of a merchant (*komaṭi*) in Andhra is that he is very timid; this is found in old literature as well as in contemporary proverbs.
20. *Kulacciriyāru*: Kulaccirai in PP.
21. *Naminandi*: Naminanti Aṭikaḷ in PP.
22. *Sāṅkhyatoṇḍa*: Cākkiyaṉār in PP.
23. *Lord of living beings*: Śiva.

24. *Cārvāka*: a materialist philosophy.
25. *Sanaka, Sanandana*: two of the four Kumāras, or "mind-born" sons of Brahma.
26. *Śeṣa and Vāsuki*: serpent kings; each of them is said to have one thousand tongues.
27. *Poṭlacĕruvu*: "The Later Calukyas were great patrons of Jainism and it was under them that Jainism in Andhra enjoyed a glorious career. The early rulers had their capital temporarily at Malkhed for some time and later at Potlakire till Kalyani was built by Someswara. Potlakire is identical with Potlaceruvu or Patanceruvu near Hyderabad." Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Andhra*, pp. 171–172.
28. *King Desiṅga Ballaha . . . Suggaladevi*: Jayasimha II, a Cāḷukya king who ruled in the eleventh century A.D. "Two of his queens are known: (1) Suggaladevi who is found making a gift in A.D. 1029 to Pasupata-acharya, Brahmarasi-Pandita." Nilakantha Sastri, "The Cāḷukyas of Kalyāṇi," p. 329.
29. *Deḍara Dāsayya*: apparently the same person who appears in chap. 4, pp. 141–144.
30. *nine-jeweled* (*navaratna*): a collective phrase for gems: diamond, lapis lazuli, agate, topaz, sapphire, emerald, ruby, coral, and pearl.
31. *Advaita . . . Vaiśeṣika*: various systems of Indian philosophy and thought. The names seem to be given here not so much to give a precise idea of what lines of thought were followed as to indicate that the debate was of a philosophical nature.
32. *Rāmanātha*: Lord of Rāma; Śiva.
33. *mālas, boyas*: untouchables and low castes.
34. *candrakānta*: a poetic term for marble, which does not seem to absorb heat as readily as do other rocks. In literary images it melts in moonlight.
35. *The relationship . . . similar pattern*: the passage in the original is unclear.
36. Svāti: Arcturus, the fifteenth lunar asterism. It is believed that the rains of this period impregnate oysters with pearls.
37. *jīva*: "individual self." See also *ātma*, "soul," which comes later in the text.
38. *space in a jar or a cloth*: that is, the space that allows an earthen pot to breathe or the space between the fibers of a cloth.
39. *churning and ripening* (*madhanapakvakriyā mānamu*): the meaning of these words is not clear; the translation given here is tentative.
40. *Rāmayya*: Lord of Rāma, Śiva.
41. *thirteen chiefs* (*tērasulu*): from skt. *trayodaśulu*.
42. *Huḷigara*: modern Lakṣmeśvar in Dharwar District. Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, p. 121.
43. *How many hearts do you have* (*ennĕdal*): literally, "how many hearts." A Telugu idiom used in challenging or warning a person who has disobeyed or attempted to disobey authority. It always has a rhetorical usage and is never used as a positive description of a real warrior. Modern Telugu uses *ĕnni guṇḍĕlu* with the same connotation.
44. *Piṭṭavva*: see chap. 4, p. 160.

45. *If a husband deviates . . . the wife to disobey him*: the high status and independence of women among the Vīraśaivas has often been cited. This and other references support such a view at least in relation to a husband who is not a devotee.
46. *Abbalūru*: "At Ablur, in Dharwar District, exists an inscription on stone, narrating at length the religious dispute between Ekāntada Rāmayya, a confirmed devotee of Śiva, viz. Sōmanātha of Abbalūr, and the Jaina residents of the place. This militant advocate vanquished the Jains not only in a polemic bout on the superiority of God Śiva but also by performing miraculous exploits. . . . Bijjala gave his verdict in favour of Rāmayya . . . endowed a village to the above named favorite deity of Rāmayya at Abbalūr after leaving his feet." Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, pp. 57–58. See also Fleet, "Inscriptions at Ablur," *Epigraphia Indica*.
47. *Ṣōḍḍaladevu Bācayya*: or Soḍḍala Bacharasa, according to the *Siṅgirāja Purāṇa* (c. A.D. 1500). Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, p. 67. Basava worked in the accounts department under this man when he first came to Kaḷyāṇa, and did not immediately take a high office. Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, p. 242.
48. *Agastya*: the sage who drank up all the water of the ocean. See Dowson, *Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, p. 5.
49. *Bhṛṅginātha*: he "had a vow of worshiping only one being, that is, Śiva; in conformity with his vow, he neglected to go around or bow down to Pārvati. Pārvati growing angry with Bhṛṅgi desired in her mind that all his flesh and blood should disappear from his body and instantly he was reduced to a skeleton covered over with only the skin. In this state he was unable to support himself in an erect position. Seeing his pitiable plight Śiva gave him a third leg so as to enable him to attain equilibrium." Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 322–323.
50. *Bhṛgu*: a vedic sage who once cursed Śiva to take the form of the liṅga and not to receive the worship of the pious and respectable. Dowson, *Dictionary of Hindu Mythlogy*, pp. 54–55.
51. *Dadhīci*: a vedic sage who helped in the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice.
52. *Gautama*: the author of *Nyāya Sūtra*, a text of logic.
53. *drove out the nondualists (Advaitas)*: this suggests the rejection of the thought of Śaṅkara, the great Vedānta philosopher who advocated nondualism.
54. *Saurāṣṭra*: modern-day Gujarat. The reference here is to the temple of Somanātha, which contained one of the twelve great liṅgas of Śiva. It was destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1025 (see the thirteenth-century account by Al-Kazwini, quoted in R. Thapar, *A History of India*, pp. 233–234) but was restored shortly thereafter and remained a popular pilgrimage site until it was more thoroughly destroyed at the end of the thirteenth century.
55. *jāgaram*: the all-night vigil kept on Śivarātri. See chap. 2, note 18.
56. *who goes out as a prostitute*: a common motif in Śaivite literature. Basava uses it in one of his poems. See Ramanujan, trans., *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 73.
57. *Someśa*: Śiva.

58. *Rāvaṇa's wishes*: Rāvaṇa wanted to take the liṅga to his capital city, Laṅka. Śiva, who hesitated to allow him to do so, permitted him with a warning that the liṅga will stay wherever it is placed on the earth. Rāvaṇa carried the liṅga carefully in his hands, but on his way, he had to stop to urinate. He asked a cowherd to hold the liṅga for him and went to urinate. When he had not returned for an hour, the cowherd got tired of the heavy liṅga and rested it on the earth. There it stuck. See ŚP 4.28 (AITM, vol. 3, pp. 1367–1368).
59. *Guḍḍavva*: see chap. 7, pp. 245–246.
60. Siddha *Rāmayya*: see chap. 2, p. 84.
61. *Sonnalikapuram*: modern Sholapur.
62. *fortified gateways*: the outer *prākārams* of medieval southern temples were, in fact, frequently crenelated. On the basis of this and other factors, Percy Brown (*Indian Architecture*, pp. 106, 115) suggests that the temples were used as fortifications in times of trouble. More recently, James Harle (*Temple* Gateways of South India, p. 5) has questioned this view: "as far as I know, only Muslims and Europeans ever used the temples for military purposes." Passages like this in BP as well as popular Telugu proverbs such as *iṇṭi kanna guḍi padilam*, "A temple is safer than home," would suggest that the use of temples as fortresses was not unknown.
63. *Govinda*: Viṣṇu.
64. *the city of Pratāpanārāyaṇa*: Pratāpanārāyaṇapuram; *puram* can mean a city or a section of a city. Here, a section of Kaḷyāṇa is probably meant.
65. *Bācirāju*: Bācayya.
66. *But how can you expect him to come to the temple of other gods, O King*: the following line appears in the original immediately after this line: *pativīvu coḷavāḷika kāka veḷavāḷikini*. We have not translated the line because we could not make any sense out of it. For a discussion on this line, see Prabhakara Sastri, ed., BP, Preface, pp. 113–114.
67. *Bhṛṅgi . . . small-time gods*: see note 49 above.
68. *Ghaṇṭākarṇa*: that is, Bell Ears.
69. *Rudram*: a section of the *Yajur Veda* known as *Śatarudrīyam*.
70. *alien name*: probably of Viṣṇu or some other deity commonly used as an exclamation. For example, *rāma rāma* or *kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa* are such exclamations in Telugu. Śaivites use *śiva śiva* instead.
71. *Hāṭakeśvara*: "the lord of gold," Śiva.
72. *temple of Viśveśvara in Kāśi*: also known as Viśvanātha, it is the most important temple in Kāśi (Banaras).
73. *Śivalĕṅka*: "servant of Śiva," a family name of Śaivites in Andhra Pradesh.
74. *Gadādhara*: "he who bears the mace," Viṣṇu.
75. *saṁhita*: a collection of vedic hymns or other sacred texts.
76. *Śrīramaṇa*: husband of Lakṣmi, Viṣṇu.
77. *Śaṅkaradāsi*: see chap. 4, p. 140.
78. *Jagadekamalla*: two Cāḷukya kings used this title in the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. This one is apparently Jayasimha, the same king who appeared as Desiṅga Ballaha in chap. 6. Deḍara Dāsayya (the champion of

that story) and Śaṅkaradāsi are elsewhere (chap. 4) shown to be his contemporaries.

79. *five syllables*: *na-maḥ-śi-vā-ya*.
80. *his own son*: Kāma, who was burned to ashes by Śiva.
81. *his own head*: refers to the story of Śiva cutting off one of Brahma's heads.
82. *Even when an elephant was destroying them*: the text has a Sanskrit quotation, *hastināhanyamānopi*, the source of which is not known.
83. *Māya*: material cause, illusion.
84. *Which . . . five . . .* : the five being referred to include Jina, Buddha, and Māya. The six systems are the Hindu systems of philosophy: Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā, and Vedānta.
85. *Somaka*: the demon who stole the Vedas and was destroyed by Viṣṇu.
86. *Kāṭakoṭa*: see chap. 2, pp. 79–80.
87. *five enclosures*: See Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. 1, pt. 2, Appendix A.
88. *Siddhas*: "The most important feature of this cult is the belief in attaining supernatural powers through *yogic* properties. . . . Srisailam was the seat of the *yogic* Śaiva cult of the Siddhas or the Nathas. . . . The Siddhas appear to have commanded great respect in medieval society in Andhra. The Telugu literature of the age makes copious references to the Siddhas, their learning and their powers." Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Andhra*, pp. 280–281. For a discussion of the Tamil Siddhas, see Zvelebil, *The Poets of the Powers*.
89. *Siri Vāsudeva*: Viṣṇu.
90. *Devaki*: the mother of Kṛṣṇa.
91. *It is superior to Viṣṇu*: the original has the following Sanskrit quotation: *tad viṣṇoḥ paraṃ padam*.
92. *Learned men constantly see it*: the original has the following Sanskrit quotation: *sadā paśyanti sūrayoḥ*.
93. *Tamil brahmins* (*aravapārulu*): *arava* is a Telugu word for the name Tamil and is sometimes used in a derogatory sense; *pāruḍu* (pl. *pārulu*) is a word for brahmin. Probably a reference to the followers of Rāmānuja.
94. *Bhṛgu's curse . . . ten times*: according to the *Padma Purāṇa*, Śiva and Brahma were cursed by Bhṛgu as unworthy of being worshiped by brahmins, but instead of cursing Viṣṇu, Bhṛgu proclaimed him the only one who would be worshiped by men. It is clear that a very different version of this story is being referred to here; cf. Dowson, *Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, pp. 54–55.
95. *Viṣṇu is born of the grandfather*: the original has the following Sanskrit quotation: *viṣṇuḥ pitāmahāt*.
96. *Brahma was born to Aditi*: cf. Dowson, *Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, p. 3.
97. *Bādarāyaṇa*: a name of Vyāsa, who is often called an incarnation of Viṣṇu.
98. *Viṣṇu position*: Viṣṇu is being depicted as an "office," much as there was one Indra after another.
99. *Jalandhara*: a demon king, son of the Ocean. He gets angry that the gods took all the good things from the ocean when they churned it. He sends

word to Indra that he should return to him all the riches they had taken from the ocean. When Indra refuses, the king goes to fight against him. Viṣṇu fights on behalf of the gods, but Jalandhara is not defeated. Finally Śiva intervenes for the gods and kills Jalandhara. Cf. ŚP 2.5.14–24 (AITM, vol. 2, pp. 863–914).

100. *Didn't the ass . . . god with lotus eyes*: Kamsa, the maternal uncle of Kṛṣṇa, imprisoned his sister, Devaki, when she was pregnant because he had been warned by a disembodied voice that her eighth child would kill him. When Kṛṣṇa was born in prison, his father, Vasudeva, who was also in prison, escaped with the boy in the night when all the guards were asleep. Just before he had walked out of the prison doors a donkey began to bray and Vasudeva, fearing that his escape would be foiled, bowed to the donkey's feet, praying him not to bray. This story is popular in the folk tradition. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* version of this story does not include the donkey episode.
101. *When a boya struck Viṣṇu with an arrow, he died*: a hunter mistook Kṛṣṇa's toe for the beak of a bird and shot an arrow that killed him. The story appears in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.
102. *Śārjñi*: Viṣṇu.
103. *Viṣvaksena*: Viṣṇu's commander-in-chief.
104. *He who killed Hari*: the text has a Sanskrit quotation: *hariṁ harantam*, source unknown.
105. *Harihara*: a combined form of Viṣṇu and Śiva that was worshiped in an effort to bring the respective sects together. But here, Hara is being interpreted in its sense of "killer of." Thus, Harihara means "the killer of Hari (Viṣṇu)."
106. *The head of Yajña was broken*: the original has a Sanskrit quotation: *yajñasya śiro bhinnam*.
107. *The straw that yakṣa laid down*: refers to Śiva's Yakṣeśvara incarnation. See ŚP 3.16 (AITM, vol. 3, pp. 1139–1143). Compare this story with that of Yakṣa, Agni, Vāyu, and the straw, in *Kena Upaniṣad* 3. 1–12.
108. *Pāvaka*: Agni, the god of fire.
109. *Kṣīrārāma*: Pālakollu in West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh; one of the five *ārāmas* (centers), sacred to Śaivites.
110. *Dvārāvati*: Dvāraka.
111. *Alampūru*: in Mahabubnagar District, Andhra Pradesh.
112. *Puṣpagiri*: in Cuddapah District, Andhra Pradesh.
113. *Bāṇa*: cf. ŚP 2.5.55–56 (AITM, vol. 2, 1047–1053), and BP, chap. 4, p. 88.
114. *Kāḷidāsa*: apparently a folk story. It is doubtful whether it is related to the Sanskrit poet by the same name.
115. *Śivanāgumayya*: there is a story of Śivanāgumayya in BP, chap. 7, but it does not include any reference to such an incident.
116. *Mayūra*: A Sanskrit poet to whom is attributed a hymn to the sun.
117. *Daṇḍi*: a Sanskrit poet, author of *Daśakumāracarita* and *Kāvyādarśa*, but this is probably a reference to another person with the same name.

CHAPTER VII

1. *Śivanāgumayya*: this is an untouchable from the lowest *mādiga* caste of tanners and cobblers. BP euphemistically calls devotees from this caste *pedda bhaktulu*. We translated this term as "Great Devotees" with capitals to distinguish it from the other uses of the word *great* in the translation. For information about Śivanāgumayya from other sources, see Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, pp. 62–66.
2. *palanquin*: reserved for gods and people of high status. By placing Śivanāgumayya in it, Basava is giving him a very elevated position.
3. *eighteen castes* (*varṇāṣṭādaśamulu*): popular and folk literature in Telugu often refers to eighteen varṇas. It is significant that BP never refers to the four varṇas of the brahminic social order.
4. *do you think . . . fertile*: it is a popular belief that rains fall regularly, and the crops yield well, if people lead a disciplined life, according to dharma. If they deviate from dharma, nature retaliates.
5. *Gōḍagara*: same as Mādiga.
6. *They placed the woman in a golden cow*: the ritual of purifying an individual by placing him in a golden cow appears elsewhere in Telugu literature; see Roghair, *The Epic of Palnāḍu*, p. 36.
7. *as if they were getting ready to cook it*: we have translated the terms for parts of the cow's body into butcher's terminology. The Telugu words used here are also butcher's terms, but the parts indicated by the English terms do not always precisely coincide with those indicated by the Telugu terms.
8. *Somādis . . .* : these are brahmin family names (*iṇṭiperlu*), and personal names, some of them with altered spellings to reflect popular and often derogatory pronunciation: Somādulu from Sāmavedulu, Saturvedulu from Caturvedulu, Upāddelayya from Uapādhyāyulayya, and so on.
9. *neck* (*munnuḍuka*): this translation is tentative. It is not clear what part of the anatomy is being referred to.
10. *māla*: here, Basava is suggesting that the real polluted people are not those who are called mālas but those who wear the thread, that is, brahmins.
11. *pravartaka . . . nivartaka*: those who are involved in action and those who have renounced action.
12. *pārijāta*: a tree of paradise that was produced at the time of the churning of the milk ocean; it was kept by Indra, but Kṛṣṇa stole it to give to his wife, Satyabhāma.
13. *Śrīpatipaṇḍita*: "Tradition associates Revaṇa, Ekorāma, Maruḷasiddha and Paṇḍitārādhya with the Ārādhya system. The last one is said to have systematised it. But much earlier than Mallikārjuna Paṇḍitārādhya, Śrīpati Paṇḍita, about whom reference is already made, started the process of brahminising Śaivism. At this same time, he tried to counteract the influence of the Mīmāṁsakas and the Advaitins by upholding *bhakti*. His line of thought culminated in Śrīkaṇṭha Śivācārya, who in his *Śrīkaṇṭha Bhāṣya*

openly declared that his system was Śaiva Viśiṣṭādvaita. In Āndhradeśa, there is still an ārādhya family which traces its descent from Śrīpati Paṇḍita." Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Andhra*, p. 289.

14. *King Anantapāla*: a Western Cāḷukyan general who ruled coastal Andhra from Bezvāḍa about A.D. 1120–1130. Śrīpatipaṇḍita was outcaste by brahmins in Bezvāḍa, (present-day Vijayavada) who refused to give him fire. He gathered fire in his upper cloth and tied it to a *jammi* tree. Fire in the city disappeared. Brahmins fell prostrate before him and begged for forgiveness; he then released fire to them.
15. *Vasiṣṭha*: a vedic sage.
16. *Parabrahma*: Skt. Parabrahman, the supreme truth.
17. *the lord of Brahma is the lord of brāhmaṇa*: the original has *brahmādhipatirbrāhmaṇodhipatiḥ*.
18. *mortar and pestle songs*: folk songs sung to keep time when husking rice or threshing other grains.
19. *udātta . . . anudātta . . . svarita*: the three pitches in vedic chanting—accented, unaccented, and mixed.
20. *pada, krama, pāṭa, and jaṭa*: different arrangements in the chanting of vedic texts in which words are repeated and reversed.
21. *Great Devotee*: see note 1 above.
22. *path of āśramadharma*: the code of brahminic religion wherein the life of a person has four stages, *āśramas*, and he follows the conduct, dharma, appropriate to each of them.
23. *āmaḍa*: a measure of distance equivalent to eight to ten miles.
24. translated tentatively, because the meaning of the original lines, given here, is not clear: *polaṅga goṅgani bŏḍici vaṅganinī vrālaṅga digiciti rela biṅkambu*.
25. *Cerama*: one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP.
26. *Bhaṭṭula Pinna . . . Cimmi Ketappa*: these are nicknames.
27. *Pappu Keśavabhattu . . . Gaḍḍamu Pĕddi*: these are also mostly nicknames; for example, Aḍḍagālu Aitana ("who walks like a crab"), Gaḍḍamu Pĕddi ("big man with a beard"), and Pappu ("legumes") Keśavabhaṭṭu (brahmins who do not eat meat usually eat a lot of legumes; other castes who eat meat call them *pappu brāhmalu*). These names indicate a lack of respect for brahmins.
28. *mālas who wear the sacred thread*: brahmins.
29. *Mādara Cĕnnayya*: it was this man whom Basava claimed as his father among the devotees. The term *mādara* is the equivalent of Telugu *mādiga*. See note 1 above.
30. *Hara, Hara*: a Śaivite expletive.
31. *Śvapacayya*: *śvapaca* is a Sanskrit word for an outcaste.
32. *kāṭĕrukus*: a forest tribe. It seems to be used in a derogatory sense to refer to the listeners, who are usually upper-caste people.
33. *Keśava*: Viṣṇu.
34. *Harihara*: see chap. 6, note 105.
35. *When a worm is touched by a bee*: this refers to a popular Sanskrit aphorism

known as *bhramarakīṭanyāya*. It is believed that the bee brings a worm, puts it in its hole, and buzzes around it. As a result of the sound, the worm turns into a bee.

36. *boya woman*: Satyavati, the fisher girl from the *Mahābhārata*. The sage Parāśara made love to her when Vyāsa was born. See van Buitenen, trans., *Mahābhārata*, vol. I, pp. 133–134. The boyas are a low caste who are known as hunters or herdsmen but not ordinarily as fishermen.
37. *Ūrvaśi*: Urvaśi, skt., a celestial nymph; the sight of her beauty caused Mitra-Varuṇa to produce Vasiṣṭha and Agastya. See *Bṛhaddevatā* 5.148–150.
38. The following two lines have been omitted because the meaning is unclear: *jannani dŏralina jāgaga bĕṭṭu mannaṭṭi yadhika pāpātmulatoḍa*.
39. *Emperor Basava*: Basava *cakravarti*. Although the term *cakravarti* can be used to refer to a supreme devotee, this is the first instance of Basava being called by this title, and signals a shift in the way the author presents him. From here on, he ceases altogether to be a servant of Bijjala.
40. *brought a great elephant and had him mount it*: elephants are ordinarily reserved for the most honored individuals, primarily royalty.
41. *Maḍivālu Mācayya . . . Vimaladevuḍu*: many of these names appear in BP, PC, and other Śaiva works. In a few cases, it is not possible to tell where one name ends and another begins, but the majority are properly divided.
42. *Mallajiyya and Bollajiyya*: Śaiva priests.
43. *one of our boys*: Caṇḍeśa, one of the Nāyaṉmār in PP.
44. *bāṇa liṅga*: liṅgas naturally found in the Narmada River are known as bāṇa liṅgas.
45. *Kedāra . . . Setuvu*: sacred Śaivite places. Kedāra is in the Himalayas. Dākṣārāma is in the West Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh and Setuvu is another name for Ramesvaram, at the southern tip of India.
46. *get by with eating balusu leaves*: an idiom in Telugu, *batikuṇṭe, balusāku tinŏccu*.
47. The following two lines have been omitted here: *jālibaḍi kanaksāmulu damaku dāma velicikonnaṭṭi vidhamayyĕ damaku*. Bandaru Tammayya suggests that *kanaka sāmulu* means "those who perform black magic." If he is correct, these lines would mean: "We will be like those who perform black magic, throwing themselves in fire, because they were too kind to burn the victim." Bandaru Tammayya, BP, p. 596.
48. The following Sanskrit quotation, which appears in the original, is left untranslated because the context is not clear: *bahvapi stokamevāpi śiṣtam annaṃ vimiśritam*.
49. *Gŏggavva . . . Purātavva*: these are female names, whereas the previous names were male. The order suggests that in spite of the Vīraśaiva tendency to give women high status, they ate after the men finished. After the women came the servants and then the animals.
50. We tried to translate the conversations here as closely as possible. Because of the spoken form of the style, interpretation could vary depending on the intonation in reading the passage.

51. *enemies become friends*: the original has a Sanskrit quotation here: *arir mitraṃ viṣaṃ pathyam*.
52. *Jagadeva, the commander-in-chief*: Basava has, of course, taken over his position, but he still bears the title.
53. *karma yogi*: one who is actively involved in the world and finds fulfillment in that path. It is interesting that this description should be applied to Jagadeva at this point, because he is the one who ends up killing Bijjala.
54. *accept these ashes*: giving ashes is a ritual way of inviting a person for dinner. See chap. 2, note 49.
55. *Can you bear all the śaraṇas*: a reference to the low and socially unaccepted castes of the devotees, who will follow Basava.
56. *anointing ceremony (abhiṣekamu)*: ritual of bathing the deity. Washing the feet of the brahmins indicates feeding them. The host washes the feet of the ritual brahmin guests before feeding them.
57. *ritualistic untouchables*: that is, those who are untouchables because they are involved in ritual, brahmins.
58. *Even seeing them is sinful*: The original has a Sanskrit quotation here: *darśanād api pāpadā*.
59. *half-born*: see chap. 1, note 104.
60. *nectar from the taṅgeḍu flower*: the taṅgeḍu grows wild and prolifically. The expression used in literature indicates readily available honey.
61. We left the following Sanskrit quotation here untranslated because it is unclear: *tena saha saṃvaset*.
62. *Paraśurāma*: Paraśurāma cleared the world of kṣatriyas twenty-one times and gave the earth to the brahmins, but he suffered at the hands of Rāma, who was an incarnation of Viṣṇu.
63. *heroic betel*: a gift of betel leaves and areca nut, *tāmbūlam*, indicating a contract given to a warrior to perform a heroic act.
64. *judged Allayya and Madhupayya*: no reason is given here for what prompted the king to this harsh sentence on Allayya and Madhupayya. "The details of this episode as recounted in the later Purāṇic works are that Brāhmaṇa Madhuvarasa gave his daughter in marriage to the untouchable Haraḷayya's son, which was condemned as a sin and a crime by the traditionalists including Bijjala." Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, p. 275, n. 10. The names Madhuvarasa and Haraḷayya are changed in BP to Madhupayya and Allayya, respectively.
65. *They wiped out the lines from Bijjala's forehead*: the lines of fate that direct one's life are believed to be written on the forehead.
66. *his mother looked at him and said*: the theme of a mother sending a man to battle is also found in Telugu oral epics.
67. *Gauri . . . her own anger*: this is a reference to the story of Dakṣa's sacrifice, to which he did not invite his own daughter Sati (Gauri) and son-in-law, Śiva. When Sati goes uninvited, Dakṣa insults Śiva in her presence.
68. *They overcame him . . . and killed him*: "Bijjala is found ruling from Kalyāṇa as

late as S. 1090 (A.D. 1168), and then we hear little more of him except in some suspicious legends according to which Bijjala lost his life through the hostility of the newly risen sect of Lingāyats whom he persecuted. These legends are contradicted by the almost contemporary evidence of the Ablūr inscriptions of the time of Kāmadeva of the Hangal branch of the Kadambas. Inscriptions of Bijjala's sons (there were at least four of them) begin to appear from some time in A.D. 1167 and continue until 1183." Nilakantha Sastri, "The Cāḷukyas of Kaḷyāṇi," p. 377.

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